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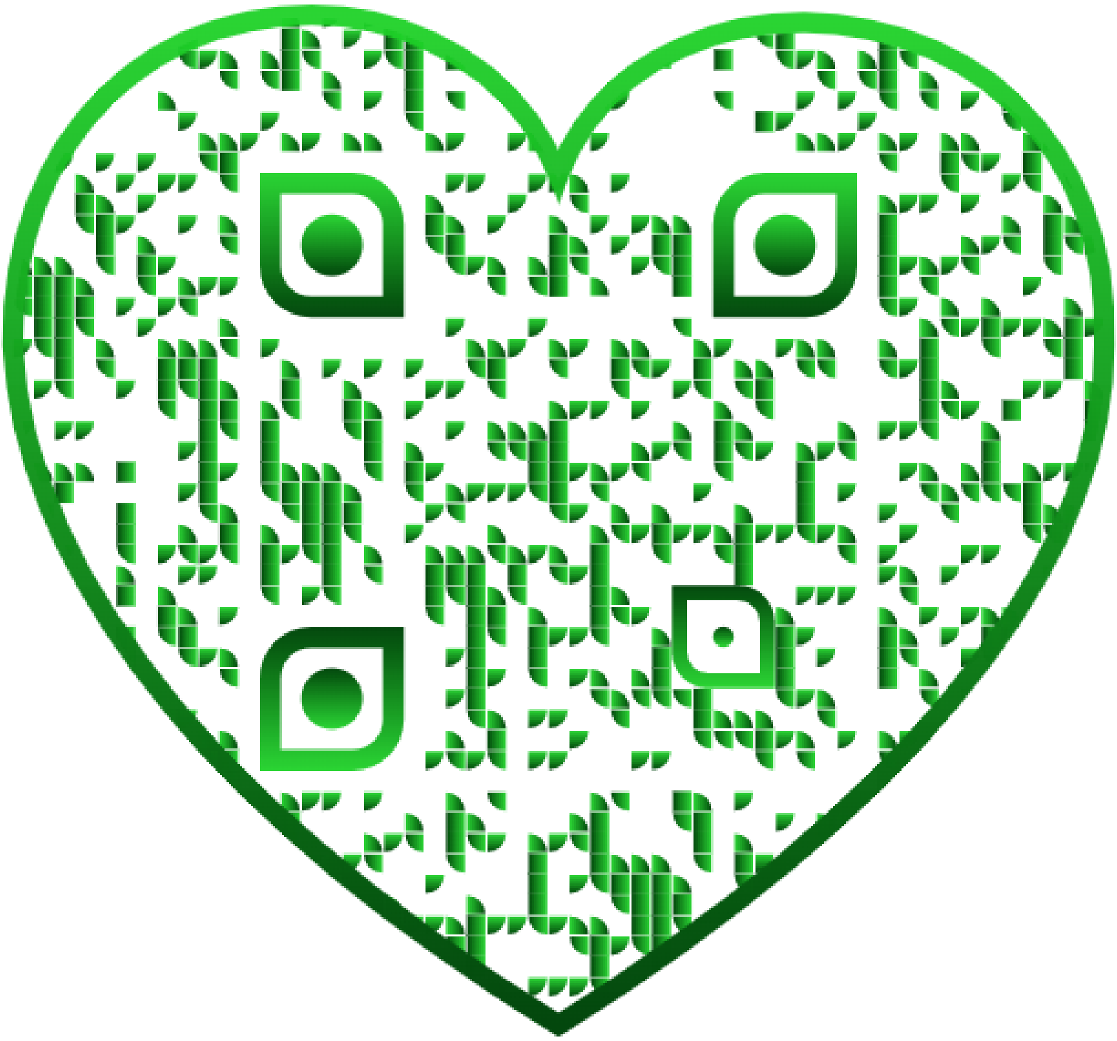

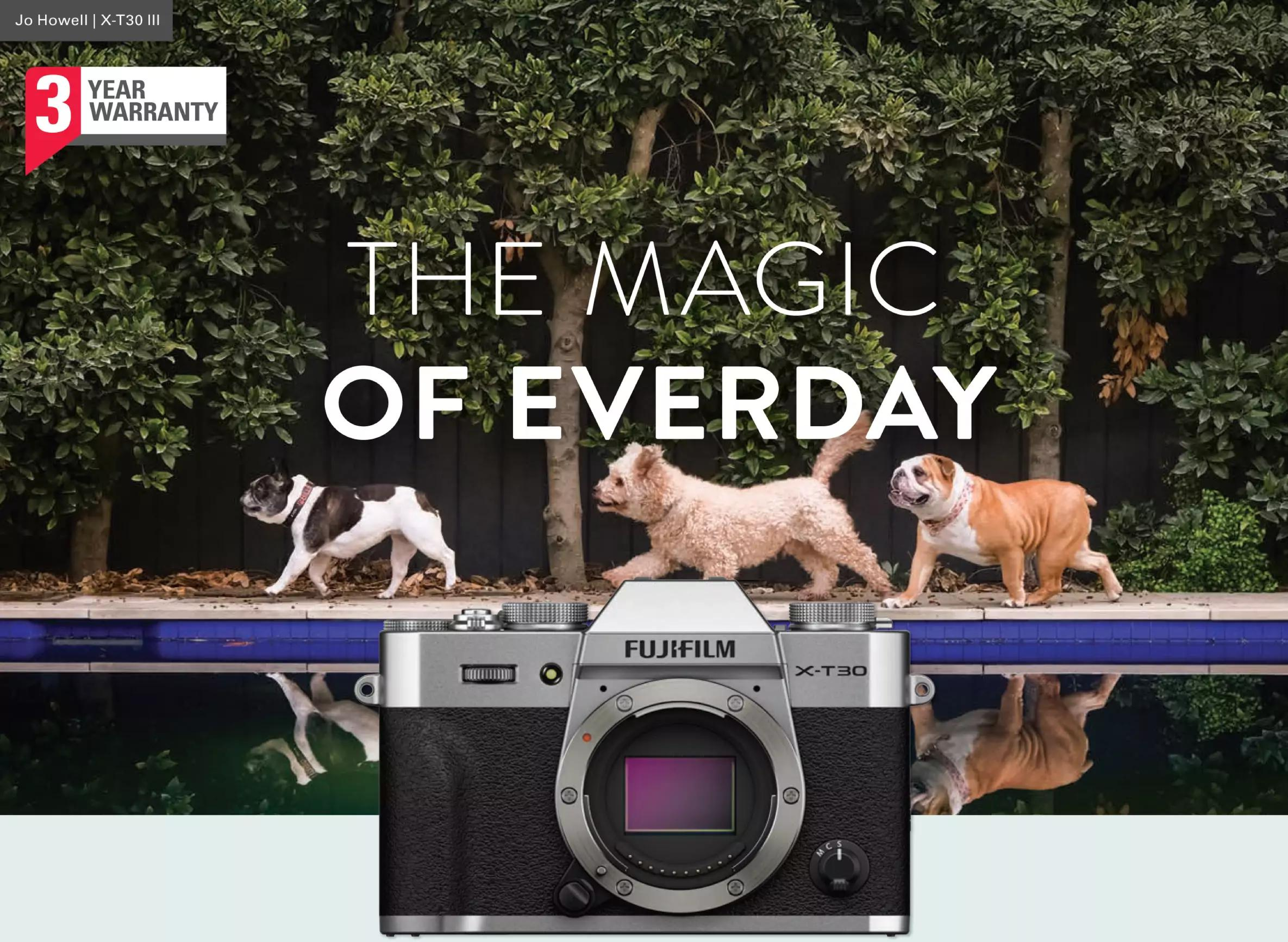

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1925 – 2025

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ISSN 0004-9964

Amazing images from the nine categories in Photographer of the Year 2025. TOP ROW: Alexandria Hammer, Mark Wassell, Sonja Bella, Neil Hummerston. BOTTOM ROW: Jen Williams, Aaryan Dhakal, Julie Spencer, Shanni Archer (top) and Walter Berger (bottom).

CELEBRATING WHAT WE LOVE

MIKE O'CONNOR, EDITOR

As the dust settles on Photographer of the Year for another year, I always take time to remind myself that behind every image in these pages sits a real person, a real story and all the complex emotions that come with putting your work out into the world.

Some of you will be holding this issue while riding the high of a category placing or a coveted commendation. Others might be quietly feeling the disappointment of missing out. And somewhere in the middle sits the vast majority of entrants, proud of what they created and still wishing it had gone a little further. The highs are high, and well, the lows can be pretty low.

Because there's no getting around it: entering a photo competition is daunting. You're pitting your work against thousands of other images, all created by people who are just as invested as you are, and just as hopeful of a good result. When the result is not what you hoped for it is quite natural to question the effort and the emotional energy that went into your entry.

And yet despite all of that, we keep returning. And there are good reasons why.

I've always believed competitions like Photographer of the Year help you grow as a photographer. A win can be a confidence boost, but the real progress comes from the process. I've spoken before about how going through the exercise of refining your work for a competition isn't easy, but it is so valuable. It teaches you about identifying images that have something important to say, and how you can craft a story in just a few well taken shots. It develops your critical eye, and makes you more deliberate behind the camera. These are all good things.

So, if you did not place in the competition this year, take heart. A panel of judges made a decision on one set of images at one point in time. That is not a reflection of your potential or your value as a photographer. And if you did place or win, congratulations in creating something that made an impact. I hope you can use it as a springboard in your journey as a photographer.

Competitions are not the final word on your photography. But they are a way to celebrate the work you love and to push yourself a little further each year. And that's what we hope keeps you coming back. ✪

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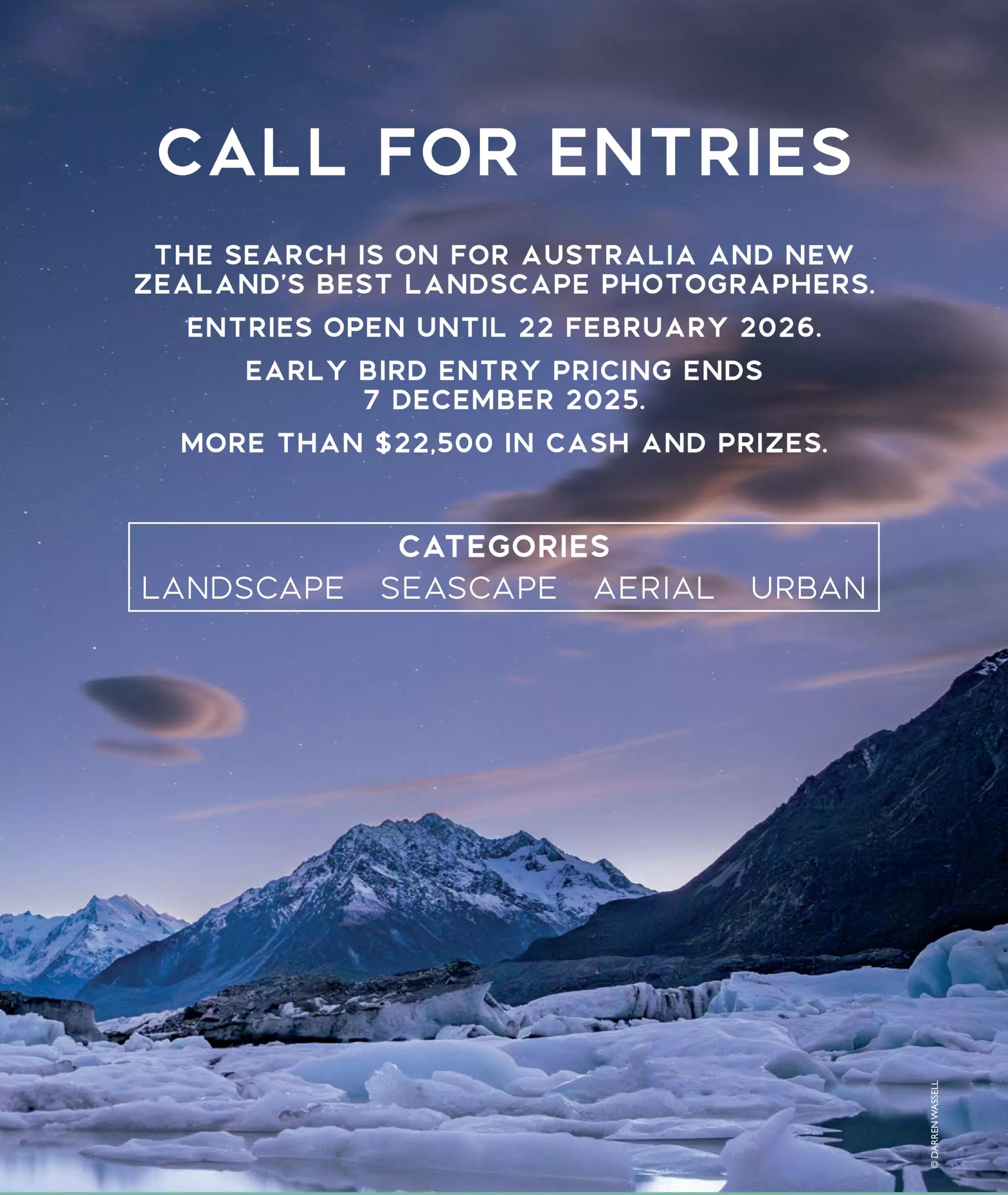

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PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2025

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26 ANIMALS AND NATURE

Animals and Nature is our most popular category, and a genuine celebration of the remarkable diversity of life on our planet.

34 PEOPLE

There are countless ways to make a compelling portrait, and this diversity is what makes the genre so challenging to judge. Read on to see our winner, runner-up and finalists.

42 AERIAL

The Aerial category covers images captured by drone, aircraft, or from any elevated vantage point, and this year's winners and finalists present scenes you simply don't encounter every day.

50 BLACK AND WHITE

A genre that challenges even seasoned photographers, shooting four compelling Black and White images is a unique challenge. Here are the judges' picks.

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A successful Travel series offers insight into a society or culture while also celebrating the small moments that make travel such a rewarding opportunity for photography.

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Single Shot is a unique category that's as broad as they come – celebrating once-in-a-lifetime images that leave viewers completely awe-struck.

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For photographers who see the camera as only part of the process, this category tests their ability to turn imagination into a unique visual experience.

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The brightest lights from the next generation of talent.

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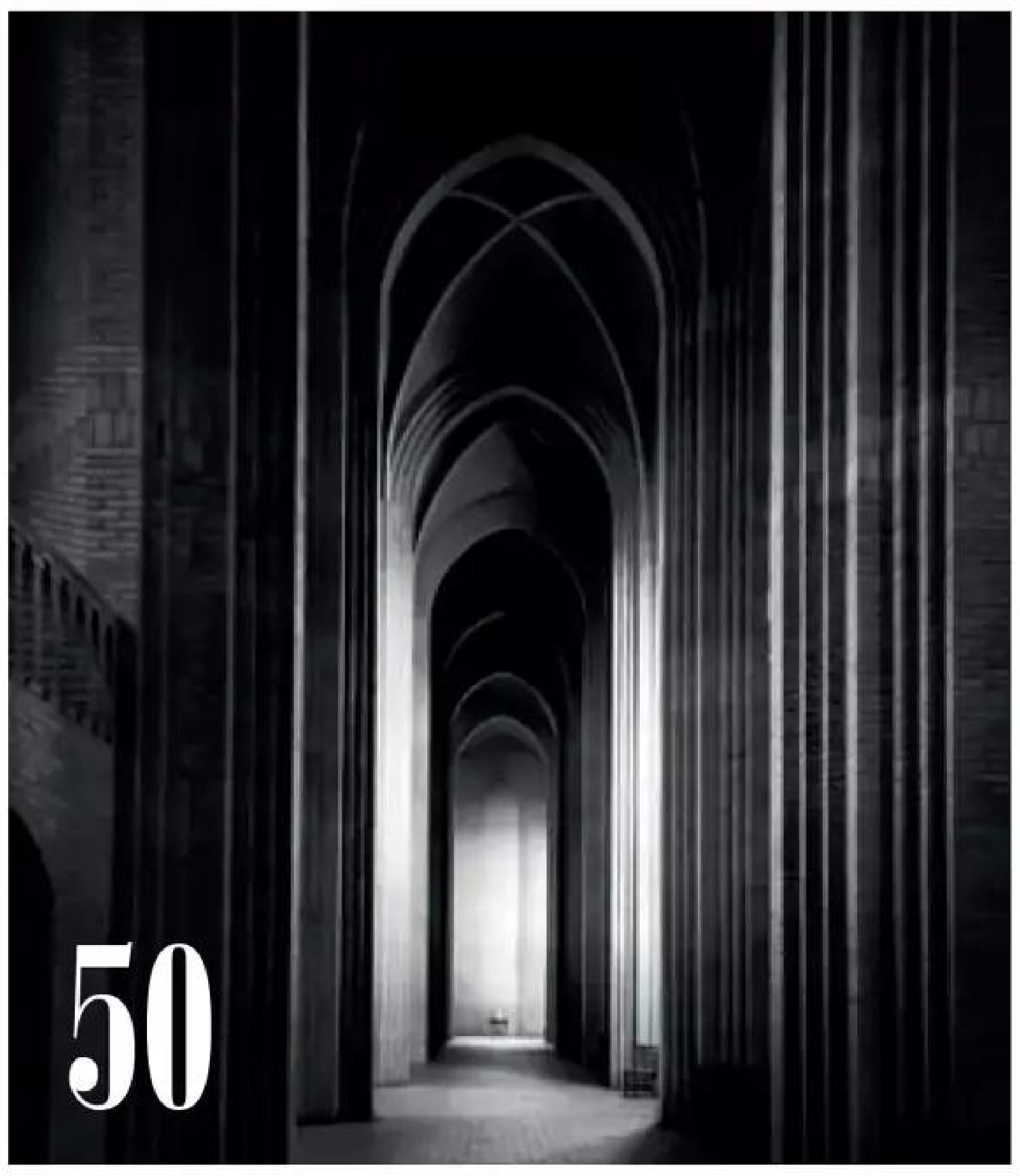
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Take a look at the best images from our 'Beach' photo competition.

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News, views, and images from the Australian Photographic Society.

THIS ISSUES COVER

Captured by Animals and Nature category runner-up Neil Kendall, his image of a leopard was captured at Shompole Wilderness Lodge in Kenya. You can read more about his series on page 27.

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QUICK SNAPS

INSTA360 RELEASES FEATHERWEIGHT X4 AIR

INSTA360 has introduced the X4 Air, a lightweight 8K 360-degree camera.

Weighing 165g, it becomes the smallest and lightest 8K 360 model in the company's X Series.

"The X4 Air is about capturing life as it happens," said Max Richer, Insta360's VP of Marketing and Co-Founder. "It lets creators stay present while capturing everything around them."

The camera includes dual 1/1.8-inch sensors and updated processing that deliver 8K footage with improved detail and colour. A new AdaptiveTone exposure system analyses light from both lenses to help retain highlights and shadows.

Active HDR is now supported up to 8K 30p. Portrait Mode aims for smoother skin tones, and noise-reduction improvements are designed to keep night footage clean.

The X4 Air uses replaceable lenses with a protective optical coating said to double drop resistance compared with the previous X4.

The camera is waterproof to 15 metres and features FlowState stabilisation and 360-degree horizon lock.

While the flagship X5 remains the top option for maximum image quality, Insta360 says the X4 Air offers many of the same strengths in a smaller body and is compatible with most X5 accessories.

In Australia, the X4 Air should be around AU$639.99 for the Standard Bundle.

You can find out more on the Insta360 website, store.insta360.com

LEICA UNVEILS FIRST M-SYSTEM CAMERA WITH BUILT-IN ELECTRONIC VIEWFINDER: THE M EV1

LEICA has introduced the M EV1, the first camera in its M-System range to include a built-in electronic viewfinder.

The new model adds another option to the long-running M lineup, sitting alongside the digital and film versions of the camera that use Leica's traditional optical rangefinder.

The electronic viewfinder on the M EV1 shows exactly what the final image will look like, while also making focus easier than a rangefinder.

The 5.76-megapixel EVF provides a high-resolution, real-time preview, with focus aids such as peaking and zoom to fine-tune manual focus. A front lever replaces the usual frameline selector and can be set to control focus assist or digital zoom.

Inside, the M EV1 uses the same full-frame BSI-CMOS sensor found in the M11, offering 60, 36 or 18-megapixel output.

The Leica M EV1 is available now through Leica Stores, authorised dealers and the Leica Online Store for (hold your wallets) $13,990 including GST.

Find out more at leica-store.com.au

OCEAN PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR EXHIBITION OPENS IN SYDNEY

SYDNEY'S Australian National Maritime Museum has opened the Ocean Photographer of the Year 2025 exhibition, presenting 112 images that explore the beauty and complexity of the marine environment while drawing attention to ongoing conservation challenges.

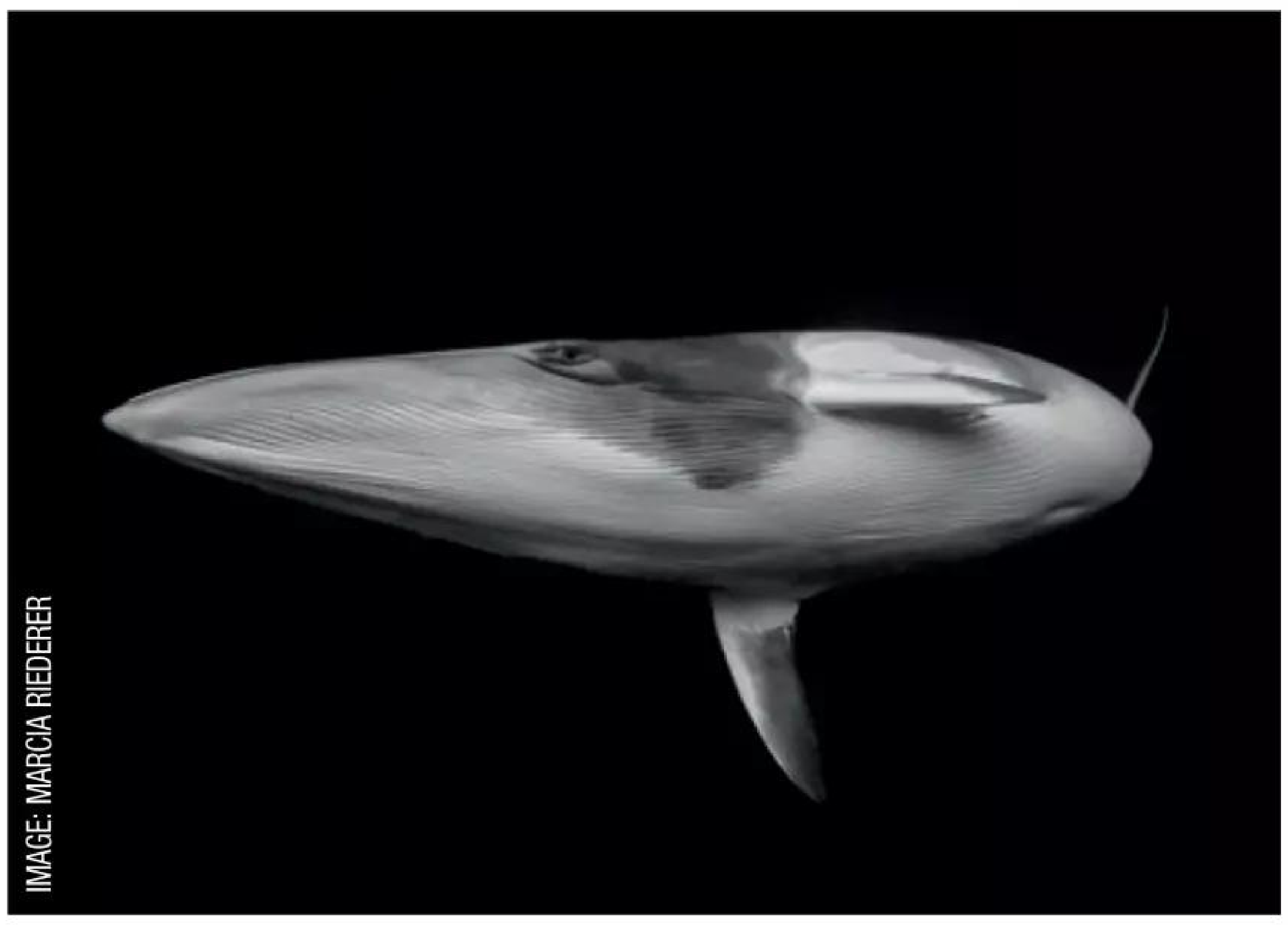
IMAGE: MARCIA RIEDERER

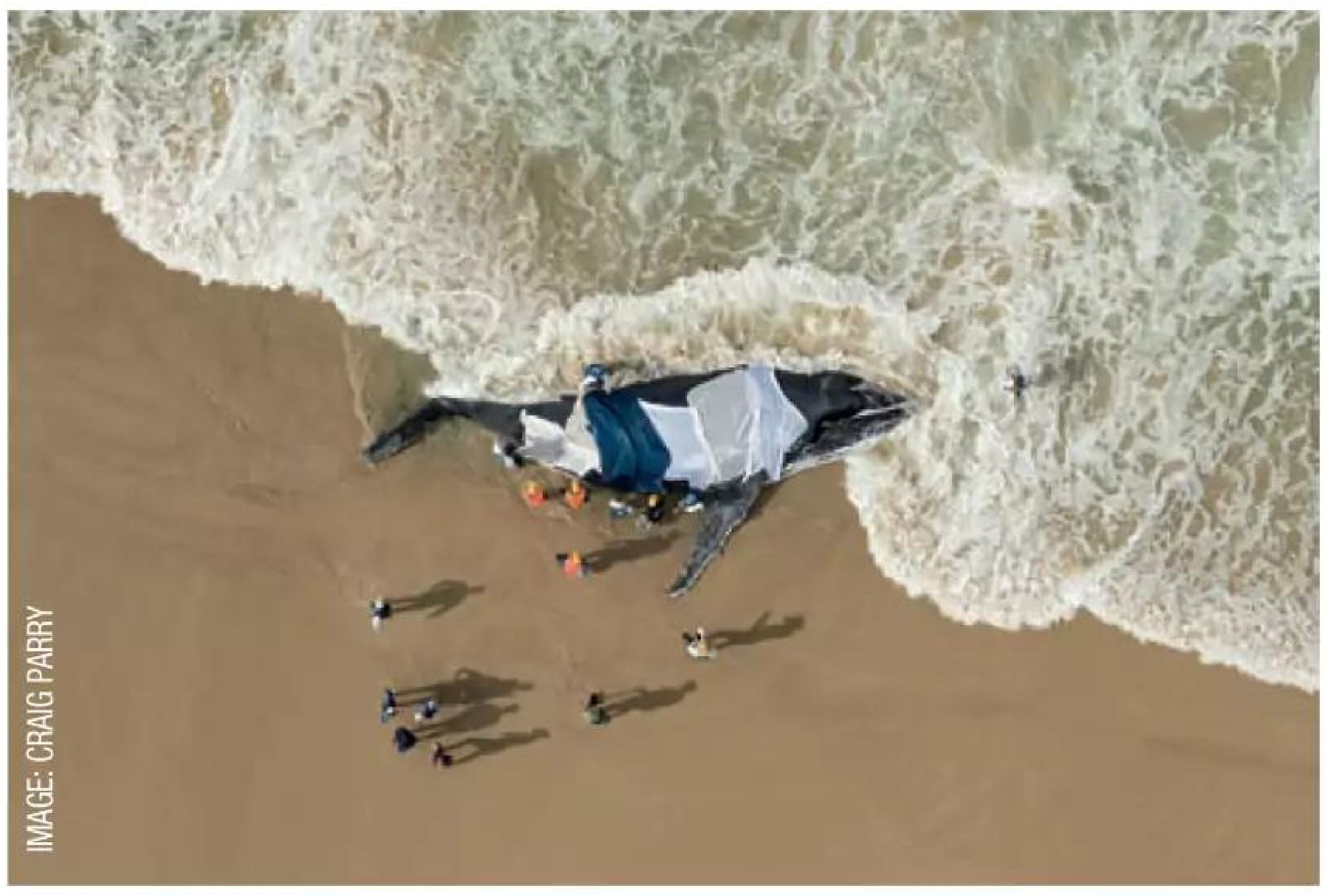
IMAGE: CRAIG PARRY

For the first time, two Australian photographers have been named category winners from more than 15,000 entries.

Melbourne photographer Marcia Riederer won the Fine Art category with an image of a dwarf minke whale captured on the Ribbon Reefs of the Great Barrier Reef.

NSW photographer Craig Parry, from Lennox Head, won the Human Connection category for a drone photograph documenting an effort to rescue a stranded humpback whale on Seven Mile Beach.

Two other Australian photographers were also recognised: Brooke Pyke, who placed third in the Portfolio category, and Gergo Rugli, runner-up in Adventure.

The overall winner for 2025 was Yury Ivanov of Indonesia for a photograph of two vividly coloured amphipods resting on coral.

Australian Photography is a media partner for the exhibition, which runs until 6 May.

You can find out more at sea.museum

NEW AI TOOLS ARRIVE IN LIGHTROOM AND PHOTOSHOP

ADOBE has announced a range of new AI features at its annual Adobe MAX conference in Los Angeles, with several updates aimed at photographers working in Lightroom and Photoshop.

The tools are intended to improve workflow speed and offer more control during editing, and there's a few welcome features.

The main update for Lightroom is Assisted Culling (now in public beta).

The feature helps photographers review large shoots by filtering images based on sharpness, focus and shooting angle, making it easier to select preferred frames among large numbers of images.

The next handy new feature is an automatic dust-removal tool for Lightroom and Adobe Camera Raw, which is now out of beta.

This tool helps clean up sensor spots in photos and is part of the Remove Distractions toolset.

In addition, Adobe says the suite also includes faster Generative Fill options for removing people or objects, now twice as quick, and the reflection-removal tool introduced last year in Adobe Camera Raw has been improved further.

Photoshop also receives several additions, including updates to Generative Fill and Upscale, and Harmonize, which blends inserted subjects or objects into a scene by adjusting colour, lighting and tone for a more consistent result. ✪

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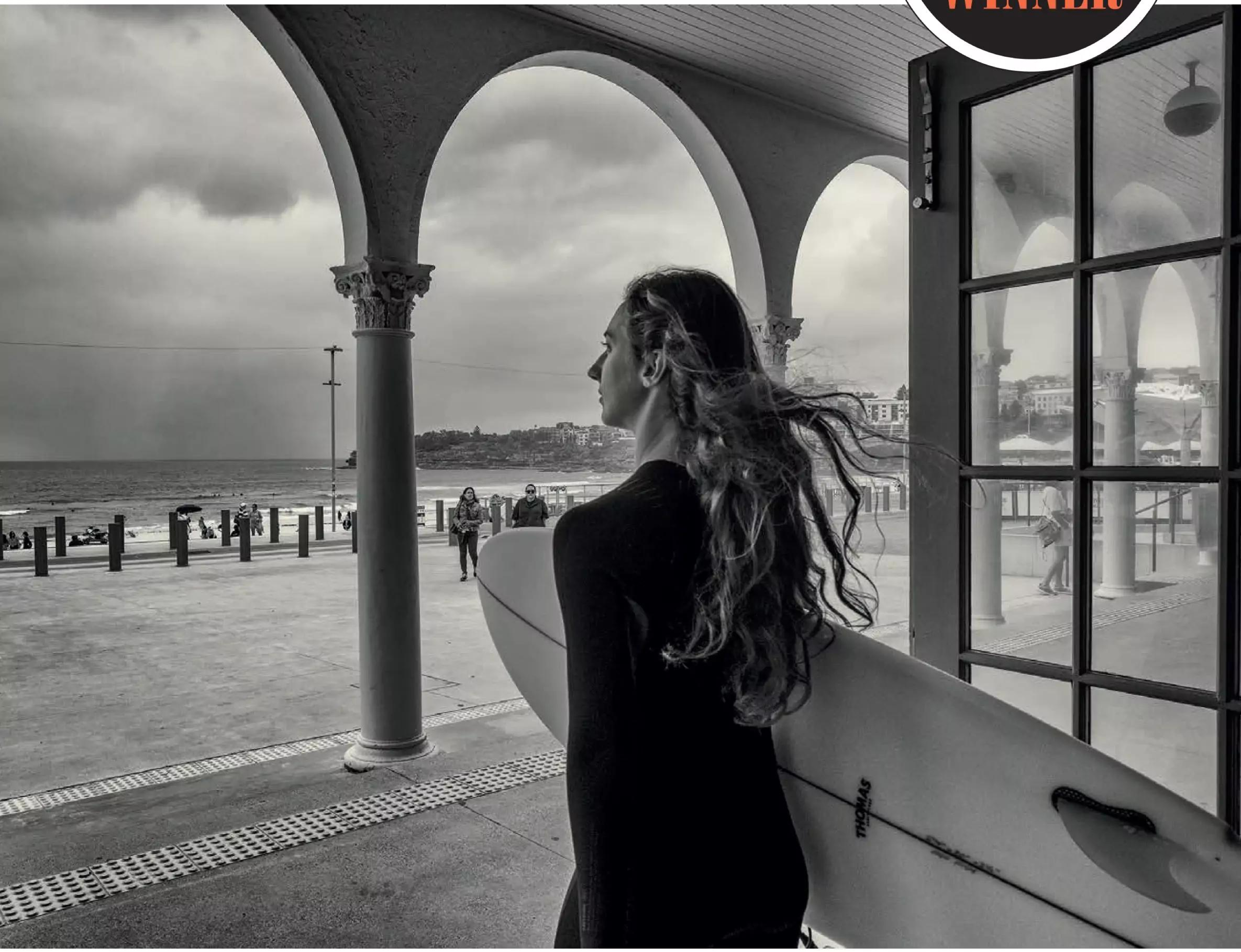
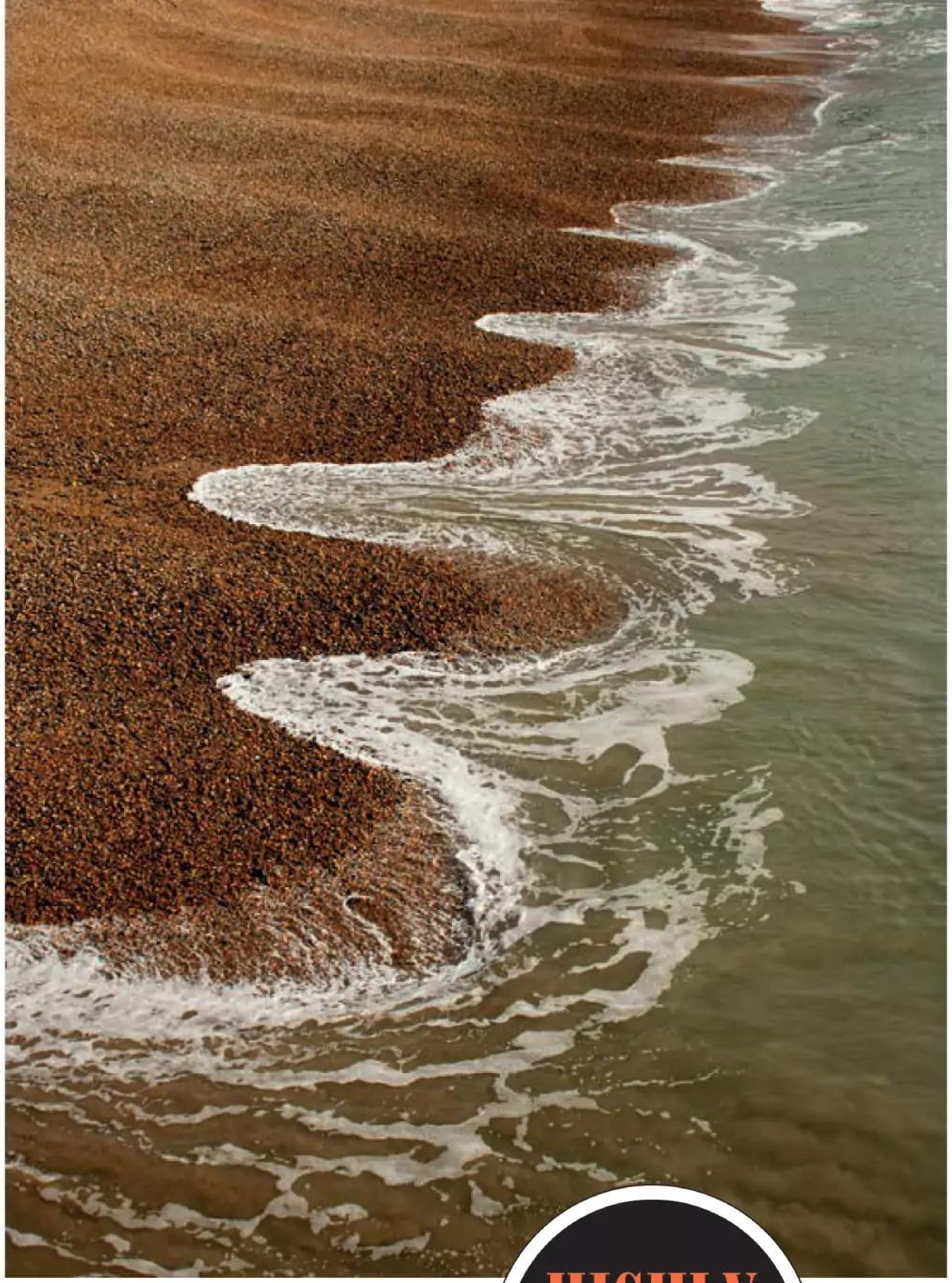
YOUR BEST SHOT

BEACH

Beaches are fantastic subjects for photography as there are so many ways you can choose to photograph them. This issue, we were looking for images that captured them in new and interesting ways, and well, you didn't disappoint! From nearly 200 entries, these were our top 6.

THIS MONTH'S WINNER





LLEYTON MUNDT

Brighton sand

EDITOR'S COMMENT
Lleyton Mundt says on his European and UK holiday he tried to take a photo in every town to look back on.

"I was trying to work the beach huts into a photo and ended up overthinking it," he recalls. "After wandering through the town I noticed the waves lapping onto the sand and came away with this shot."

Well done on finding a quieter frame to focus on! The result is a simple 'pattern' shot done really well, with no distractions to challenge the viewer's attention. There's some nice soft textures as well that really add to the image too.

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Canon EOS 70D, 18mm-55mm lens @ 31mm. 1/400s @ f11, ISO 200.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

PENELOPE ROBERTSHAW

Bondi surfer

EDITOR'S COMMENT
Penelope Robertshaw says this shot from inside the Bondi Pavilion at Bondi Beach was captured during a light rainfall.

"This surfer gifted me with a striking foreground subject for the beach and headland beyond," she says.

What we liked about Penelope's image was how she not only captured a busy beach setting, but also drew our attention to the young surfer surveying the scene, presumably before heading down to the water.

There is a hint of apprehension in her expression perhaps, but also a quiet confidence. That mix of emotion adds depth to the moment and brings something different to the frame.

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Nikon Z7 II, NIKKOR Z 24 mm f/1.8 S lens. 1/800s @ f10, ISO 640.

Thanks to the team at Blonde Robot, Penelope Robertshaw has won a Think Tank DarkLight Backpack in 20L size. Also available in 14L, the DarkLight is the ideal blend of tactical style and everyday functionality. Whether you're an enthusiast capturing cityscapes or an advanced amateur exploring the great outdoors, it offers a durable and comfortable solution to carry your gear. Built with a laser-cut MOLLE panel and tactical webbing rails, this rucksack allows you to precisely configure your loadout.

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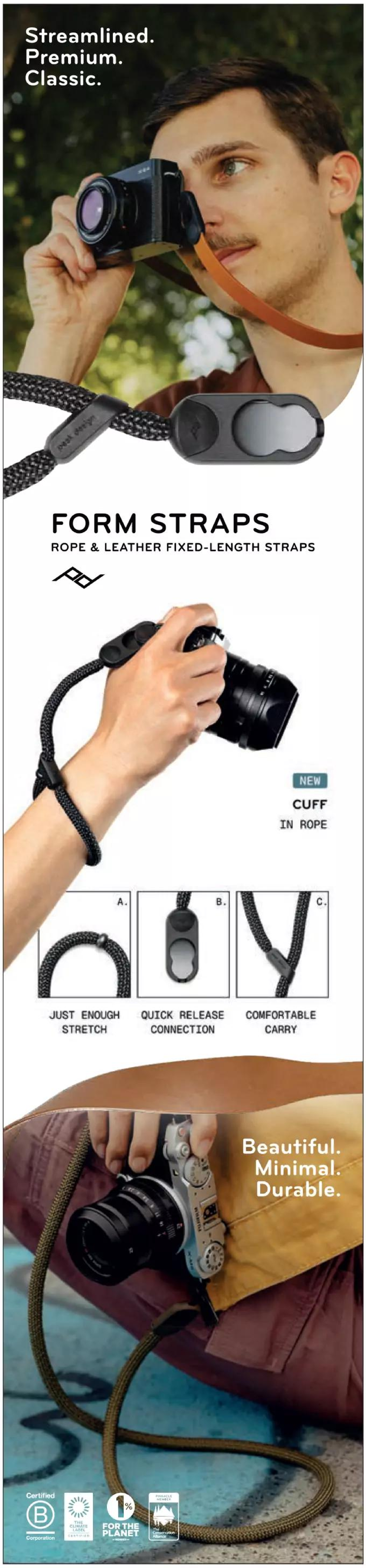
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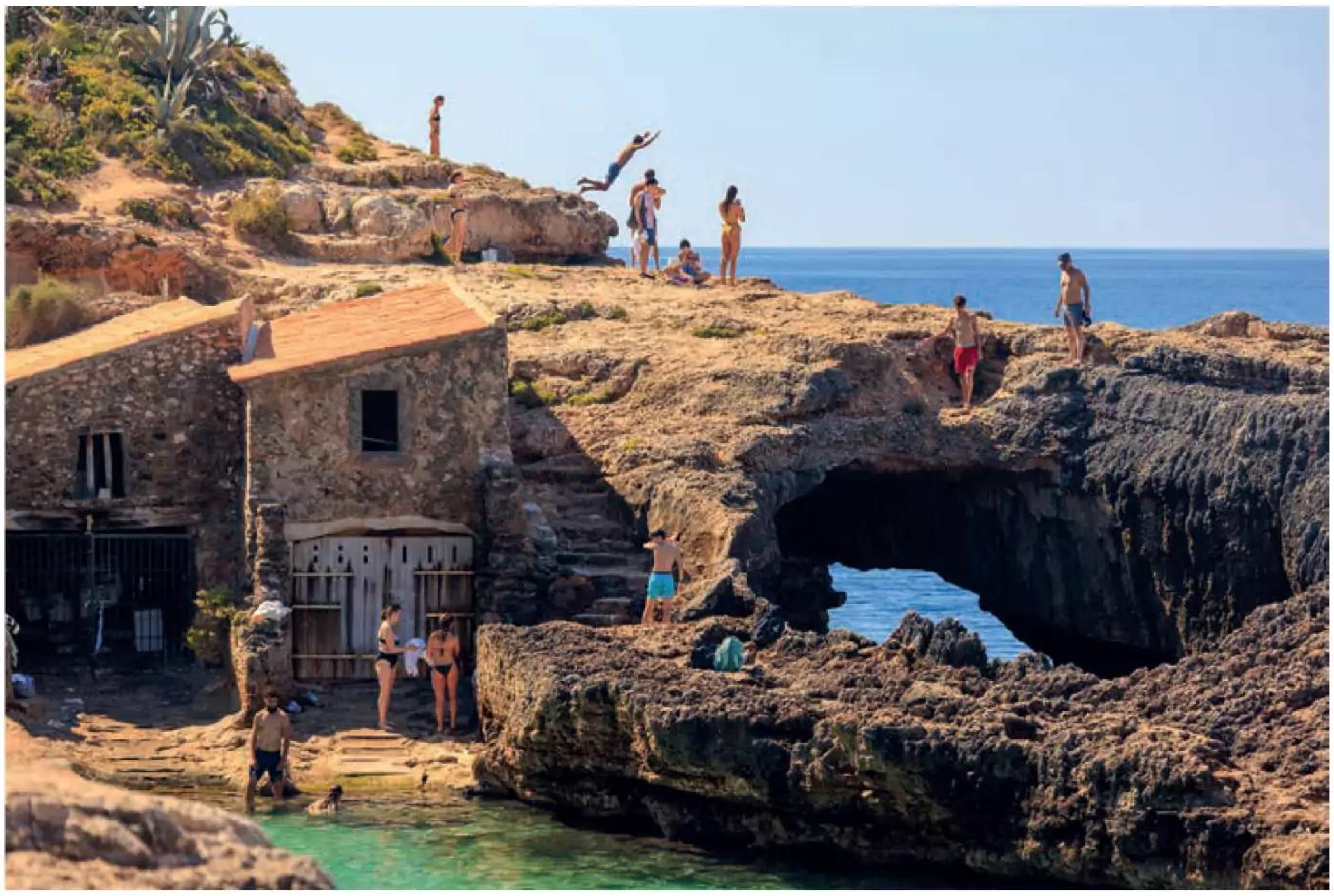


ARIEL BRINER

The beach

HOW I DID IT
The shot was taken handheld on a summer's morning in Mallorca while exploring a new beach with my family.

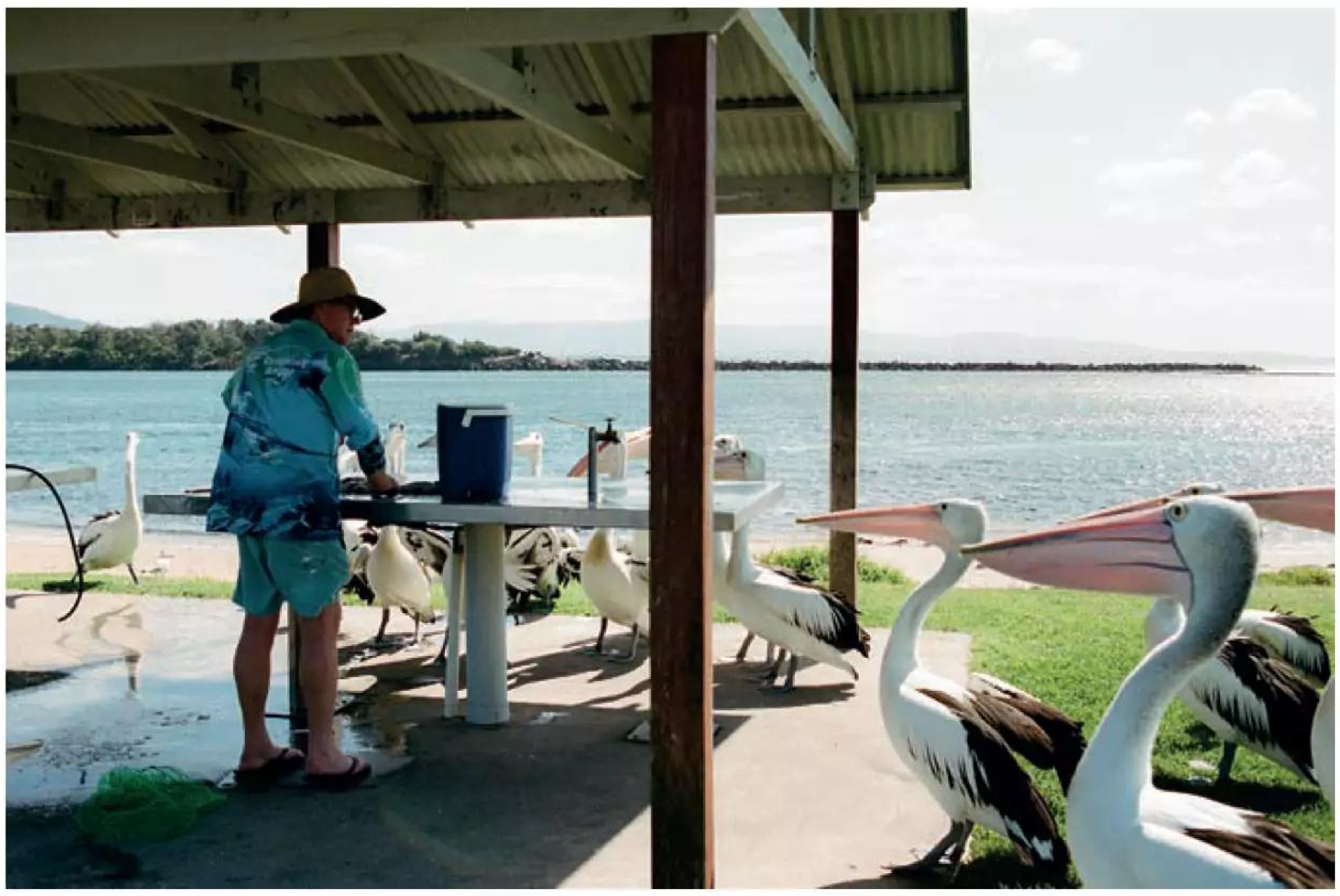
TECHNICAL DETAILS
Canon EOS R5, Canon RF 70–200mm F4 L IS USM lens @ 135mm. 1/160s @ f4, ISO 100. Polarising filter.

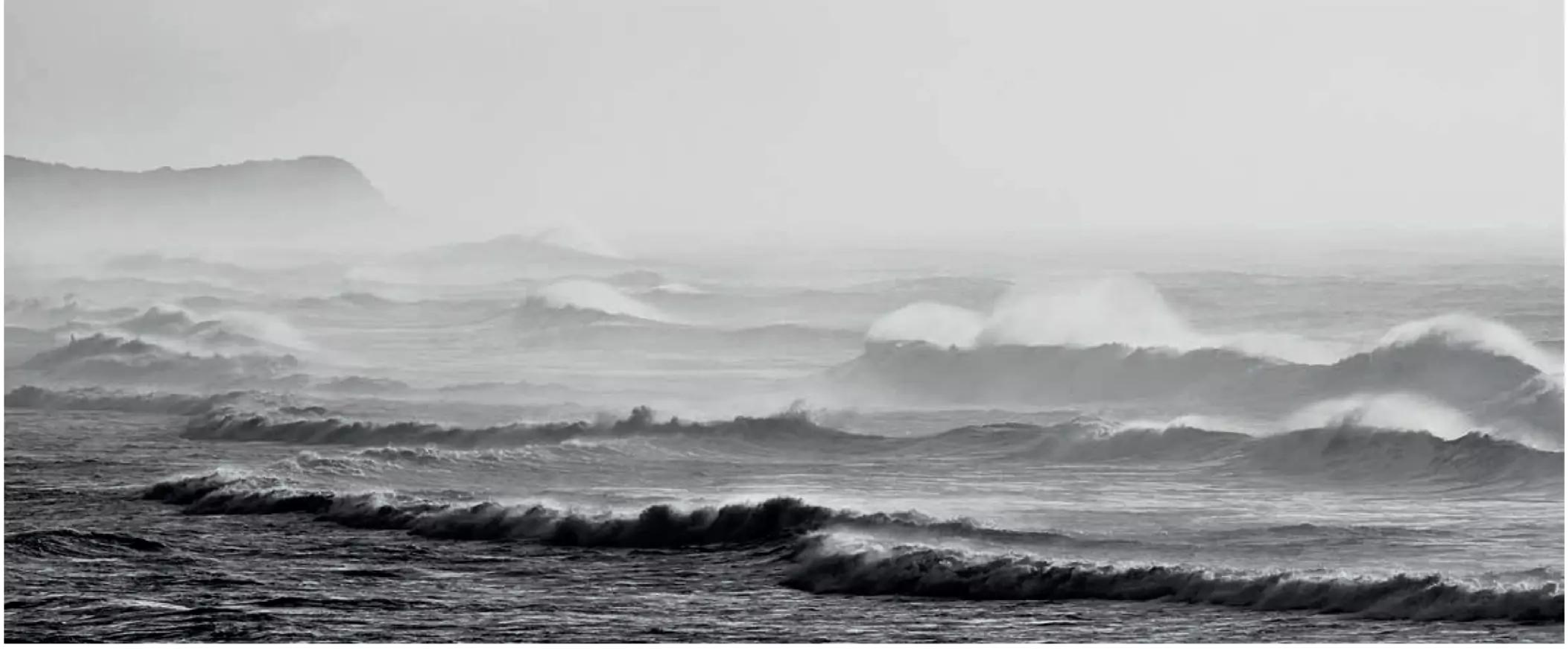
NICHOLAS FERRANTE

Standoff

HOW I DID IT
I came across this really bizarre scene during a family holiday to Culburra, NSW, where a fisherman was being swarmed by a pack of pelicans. I love how this frame captures the tension and menacing foreboding of the pelicans, ready to pounce on any scraps of fish.

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Nikon F2, Kodak Portra 400 (expired), 35mm AIS Lens, aperture and shutter speed unknown.



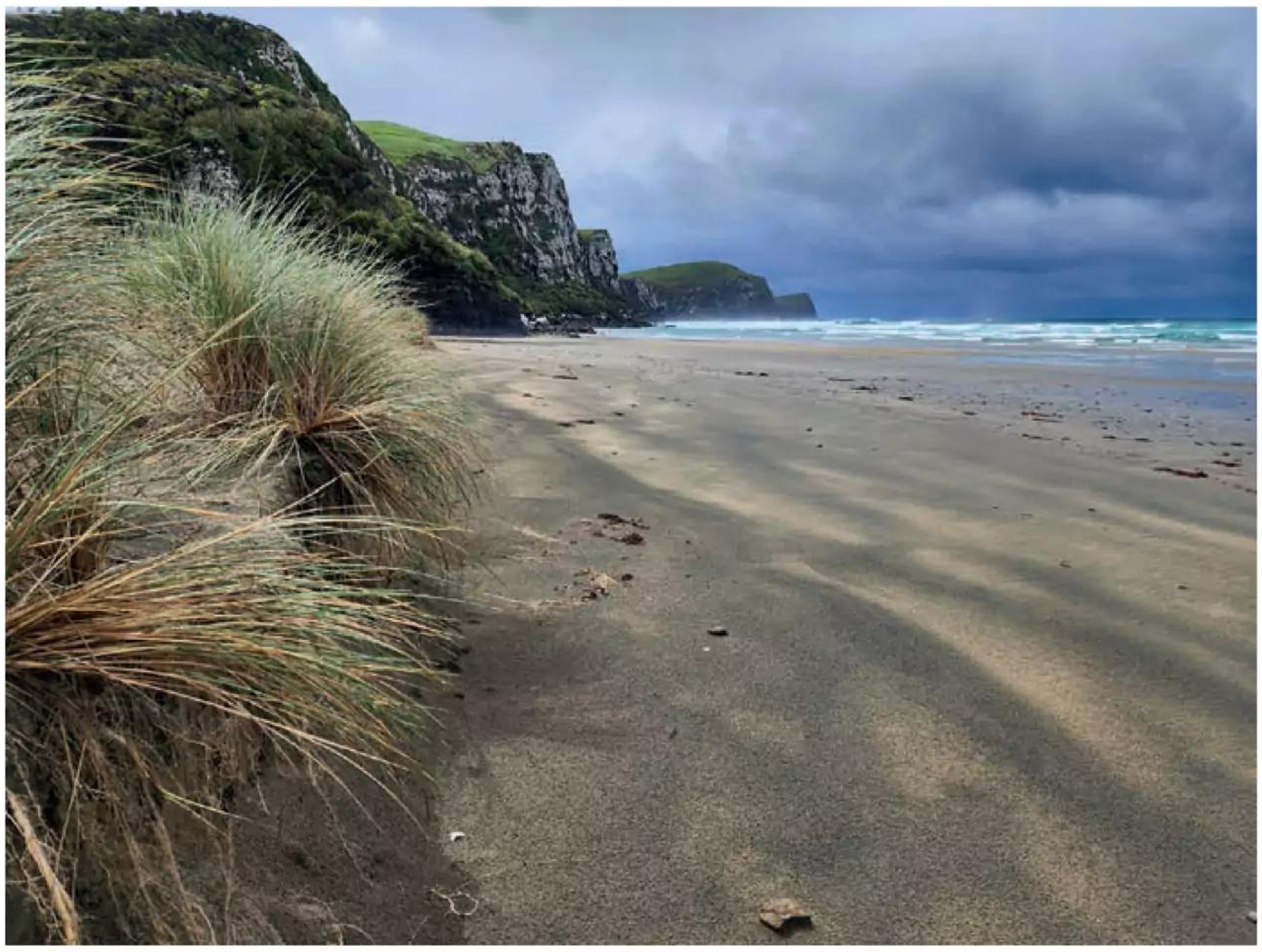


BILL HANCOCK

Wave Crash

HOW I DID IT
I am lucky enough to live on the Central Coast of NSW and have many beaches and waterways to choose from. This one was at Birdie Beach, NSW.

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Fuji X-T5, lens unknown. 1/320s @ f9, ISO 125.



FIONA TREADWELL

The Catlins

HOW I DID IT
We were staying at a perfect Bed and Breakfast in The Catlins, New Zealand for two nights. We were practically locked in as there was a car rally closing the only road in or out. In between showers we walked to the beach and I got low to get this dramatic picture. This was just taken on my phone.

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Samsung S22, 6.4mm lens. 1/1600s @ f1.8, ISO 12.

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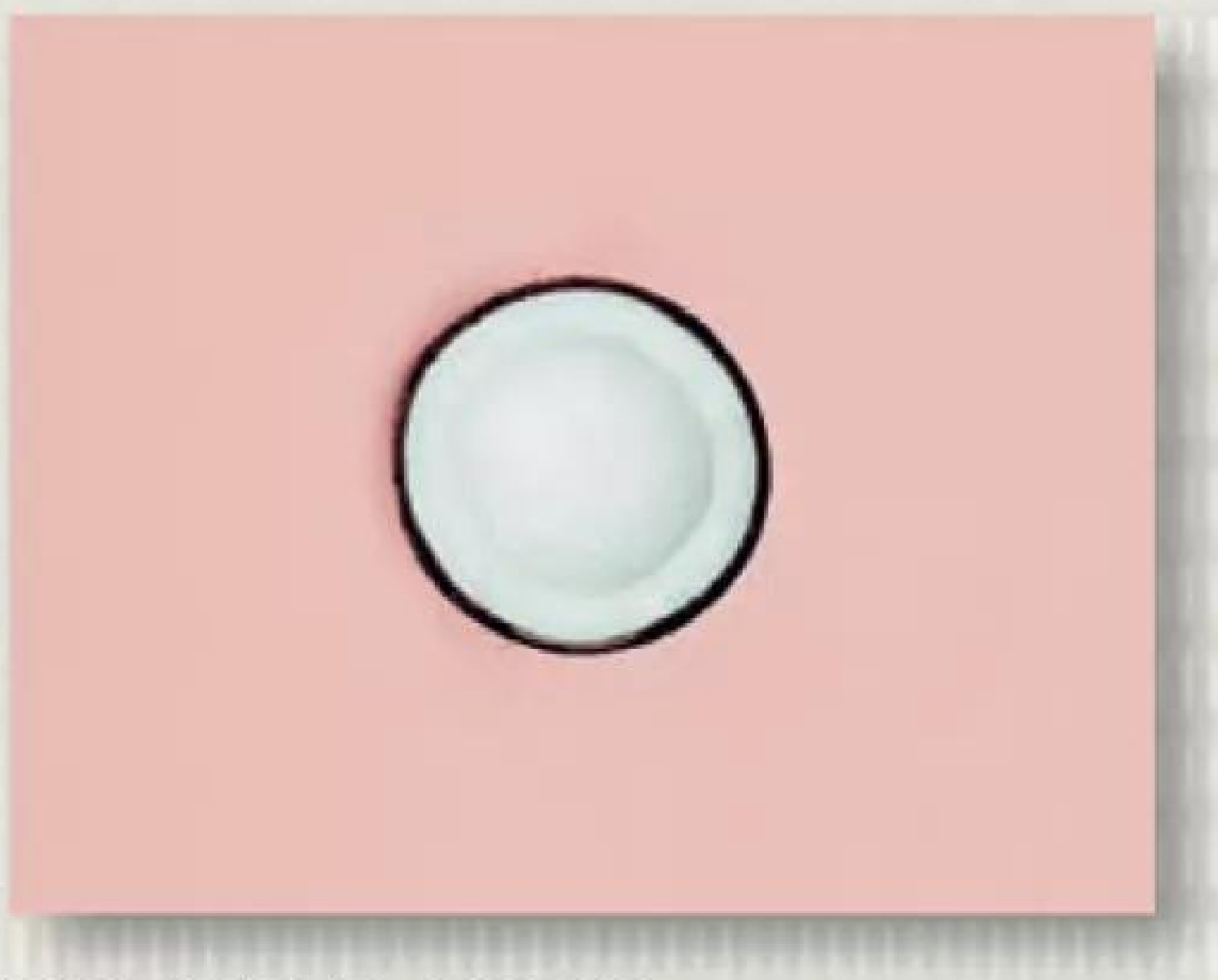
YOUR BEST SHOT IS OPEN TO ANYONE IN AUSTRALIA. TO ENTER AN IMAGE IN THE COMP, CHECK THE COMPETITION THEMES AND INSTRUCTIONS BELOW AND EMAIL YOUR BEST IMAGE TO YOURBESTSHOT@AUSTRALIANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

UPCOMING COMPETITION THEMES

APRIL 2026
ABSTRACT
31 January 2026

JUNE 2026
BIG AND SMALL
31 March 2026

AUGUST 2026
SOFT LIGHT
31 May 2026



OCTOBER 2026
MINIMALISM
31 July 2026

DECEMBER 2026
UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES
30 September 2026

YOUR ENTRY

1. Email your entry to yourbestshot@australianphotography.com with the name of the competition theme in the email subject line, for example: Weather, Abstract, Landscape, etc.
2. The image file must be the same as your name, for example Jane Smith.jpg. If you enter multiple images, each new image file name should be appended with a unique number, eg Jane Smith2.jpg
3. A maximum of three images can be entered per person.
4. Images must be in JPEG format.
5. Email file size must not exceed 7MB.
6. Please include the following information about your entry in the body of your email: Name, image title and up to 200 words explaining how you created your image. Please also include technical details including camera, lens, focal length, shutter speed, aperture, ISO, tripod (if used) and a brief summary of any software edits.

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PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2025

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From more than 3,000 entries, Queensland's Jason Keeler has won the overall title of Photographer of the Year for 2025, for his visceral Landscape category-winning series *Reduction Burn*.

The win caps a hugely successful 2025 for the New Zealand-born photographer, who captured the winning series south of Townsville. After stumbling upon the reduction burn while driving home one evening, he grabbed his camera and set out to document it not just in a traditional landscape photography way, but with a real photojournalistic approach.

For our judges, the series showcased everything that makes a great series truly powerful.

"Jason brought together many of the skills we would apply to professional images," said judge Anthony McKee. "The photographs inspire a level wariness in us, but they manage to capture a mysterious beauty at the same time."

Photographer of the Year, now in its 13th year, challenges photographers in the major categories to shoot four images that work together as a cohesive series. It had a prize pool valued at more than $28,000.

For 2025, images came from both Australia and New Zealand, with work captured on digital, film and smartphones vying for honours.

A selection of our winners and runners-up in the competition will now be exhibited at Ted's World of Imaging in Sydney in early 2026 – keep an eye on the *Australian Photography* website for more information about the exhibition opening.

We're hugely grateful to our amazing major sponsor Ted's Cameras, and supporting sponsors Western Digital, Ilford, Photobookshop, Gigabyte, Aorus, Retouch4Me, Kudos cameras, Billingham, The Brownbill Effect, Jobo and Cura.

To our judges tasked with choosing their favourite images, we hugely appreciate your work in this most challenging of tasks. A huge thanks to the amazing Alex Cearns OAM, Helen Whittle, Will Patino, Douwe Dijkstra, Drew Hopper, Mandarine Montgomery, Ann and Steve Toon, Anthony McKee, Lisa Michele Burns, Doug Gimesy, Sally Brownbill, Tim Levy, and Petra Leary.

And finally, and most importantly, to all our entrants – thank you. Photographer of the Year has showcased the best amateur photography for nearly 15 years thanks to the support of photographers like you.

For us at *Australian Photography*, the greatest joy in running the competition comes from giving you a platform to promote your work, and also seeing where our winners go next – so many have used the competition as a stepping stone to bigger and better things.

Of course, it's entirely possible that you didn't receive the recognition you had hoped for this year. For that, we can only thank you for giving it a go. Opening up your work for critique is never easy, and it's a leap many photographers might never take at all. It's worth noting too that for many of our entrants, there's been plenty of setbacks before the recognition they deserve has come their way. Regardless of how the cards fell, your work has value, and having the courage to enter it is something to be commended.

We'll be back again for the 2026 edition of the competition in May. We can't wait to see what you come up with.

© PAUL WESTON

© AARYAN DHAKAL

© ALISON THORBURN

© SONJA BELLA

© IRMA FERREIRA

© KIM BOHNING

© NEIL KENDALL

OVERALL WINNER AND WINNER

LANDSCAPE

JASON KEELER

@eye_kaptured

REDUCTION BURN

JASON Keeler's dynamic and evocative Photographer of the Year winning series wowed our judges by doing one thing all great imagery must do – put the viewer right into the action.

New Zealand-born and now based in Queensland, Keeler has previously been recognised in our sister competition, The Landscape Awards. The predominantly self-taught photographer has continued to refine his eye since that earlier win.

For *Reduction Burn*, Keeler focused on a subject familiar to many Australians.

"Travelling home late one evening, I was lucky to come across a reduction burn," he explains. "I pulled up, grabbed my camera and tripod, and jumped out as the Rural Fire team monitored the burn. My jandals and feet were quickly blackened as I got up close to the ashened ground, the slow creeping fire crackling and popping as it consumed new foliage.

"As the fire front climbed the hillside, it drew my focus – burning bark, layers, and small spot fires. Trucks and cars passing by added a new dimension for long exposure shots, as did a culvert under the road, which framed the flames beautifully.

"After more than three hours, a few hundred shots, and over half a kilometre from where I started, I headed home excited, having captured what I thought was a wonderful series of pictures."

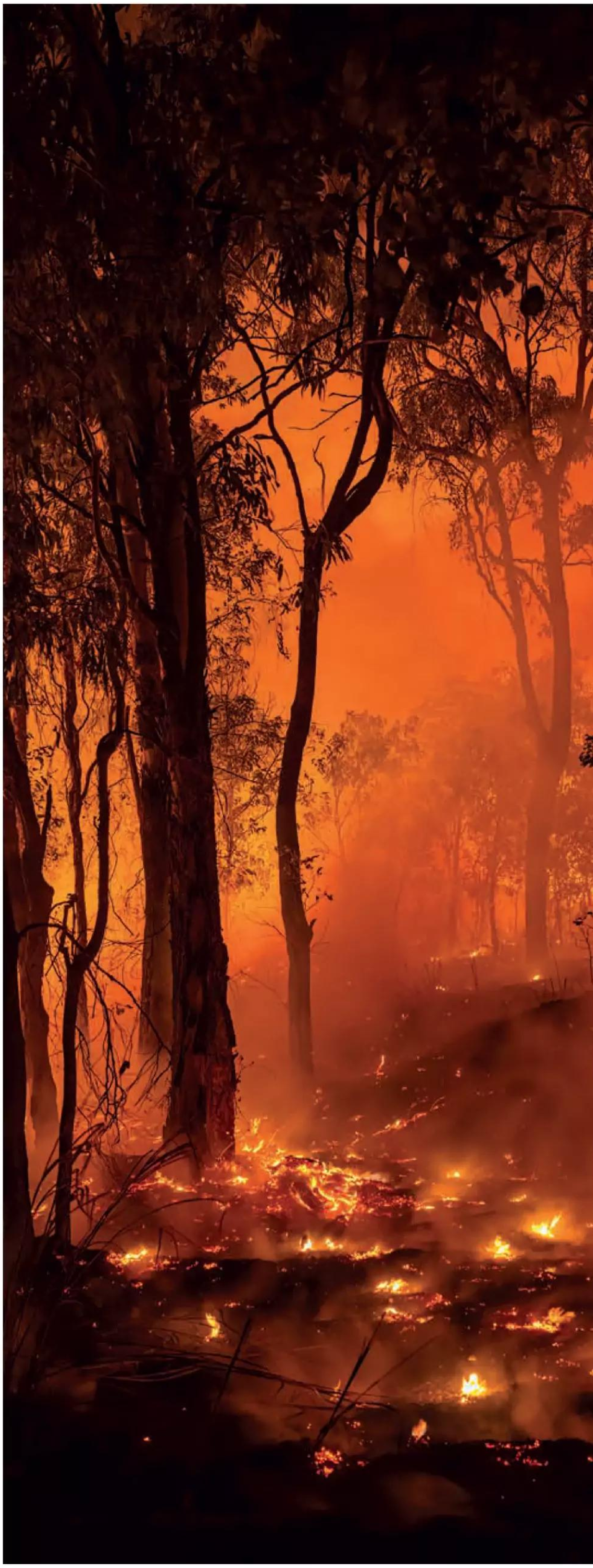
For our judges, the visceral, raw captures and the diversity of imagery in the series were a standout this year.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

ANTHONY MCKEE: Of the thousands of images judges reviewed this year, it was Jason Keeler's *Reduction Burn* that lingered in our minds. While most Australians justifiably have a rational fear of bushfires, Jason used the rare opportunity to seek photographs during a reduction burn. Rather than snatching photos in the moment though, Jason brought together many of the skills we would apply to professional images; a slow shutter speed to capture the blur of traffic as it passes the fires, a concrete culvert providing a frame to burning logs, and the smokey orange silhouettes that any other day of the week could be an element in a gentle landscape image. The photographs inspire a level of wariness in us, but they manage to capture a mysterious beauty at the same time. Well done that man!

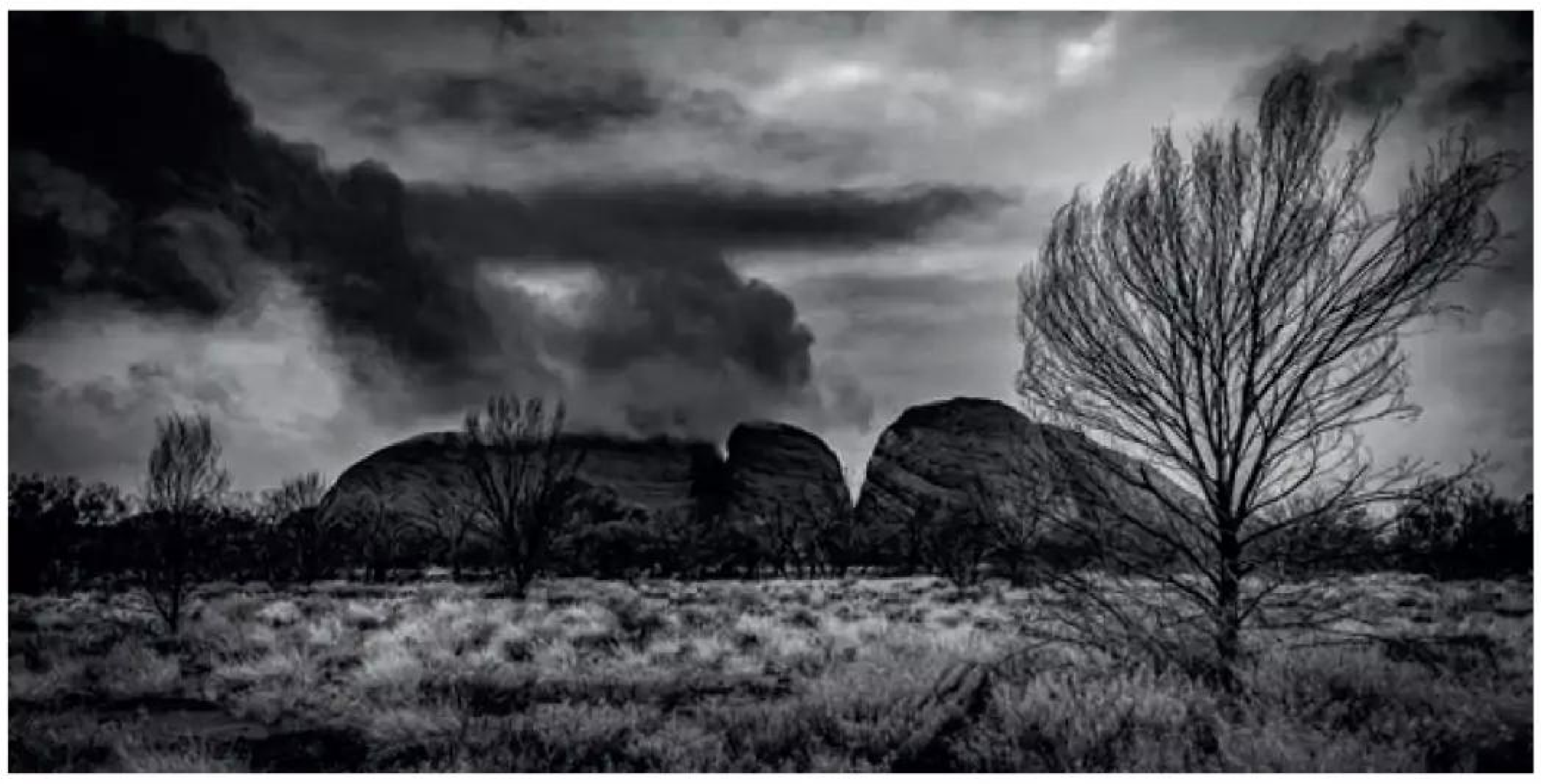
WILL PATINO: Creating a series like this requires dedication, vision and the technical ability to bring everything together effectively. Jason has done a great job showcasing power, devastation and beauty through a variety of different exposures and compositions, making each piece strong individually, while also complementing each other collectively.

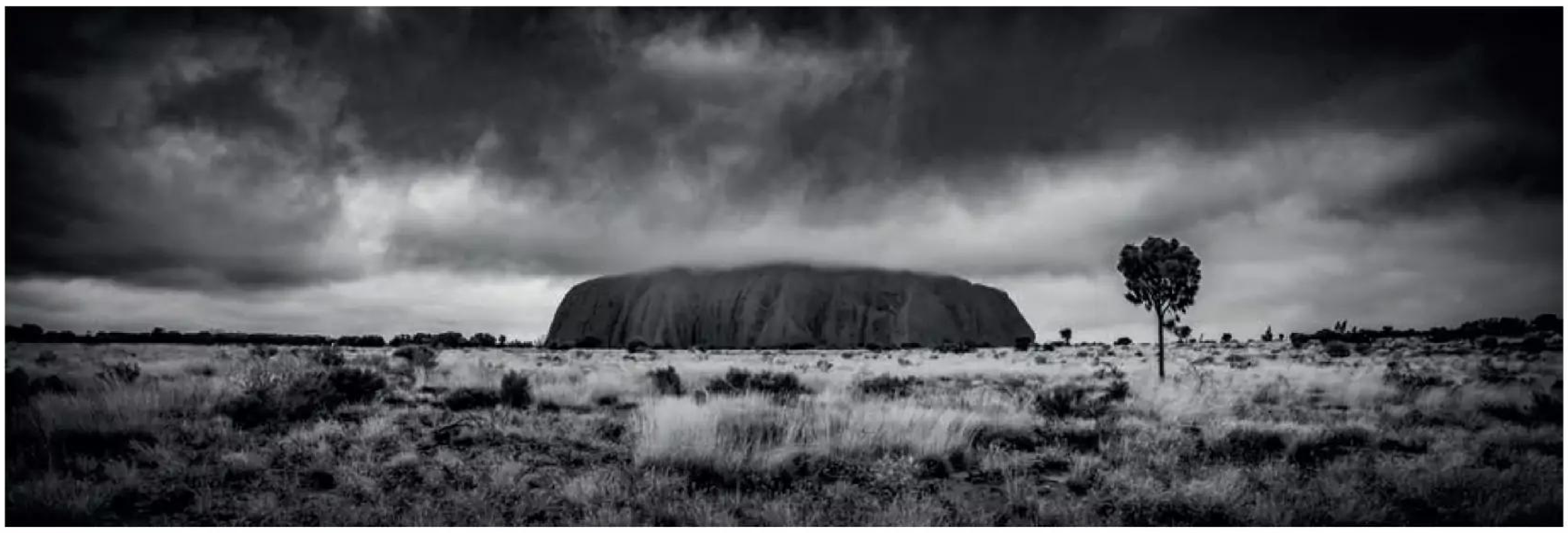
PRIZE: $2000 cash and an Aorus FO27Q3 OLED Monitor from Gigabyte valued at $1499, a Photobookshop HD layflat photobook valued at $289, plus three Retouch4Me photo retouching apps.

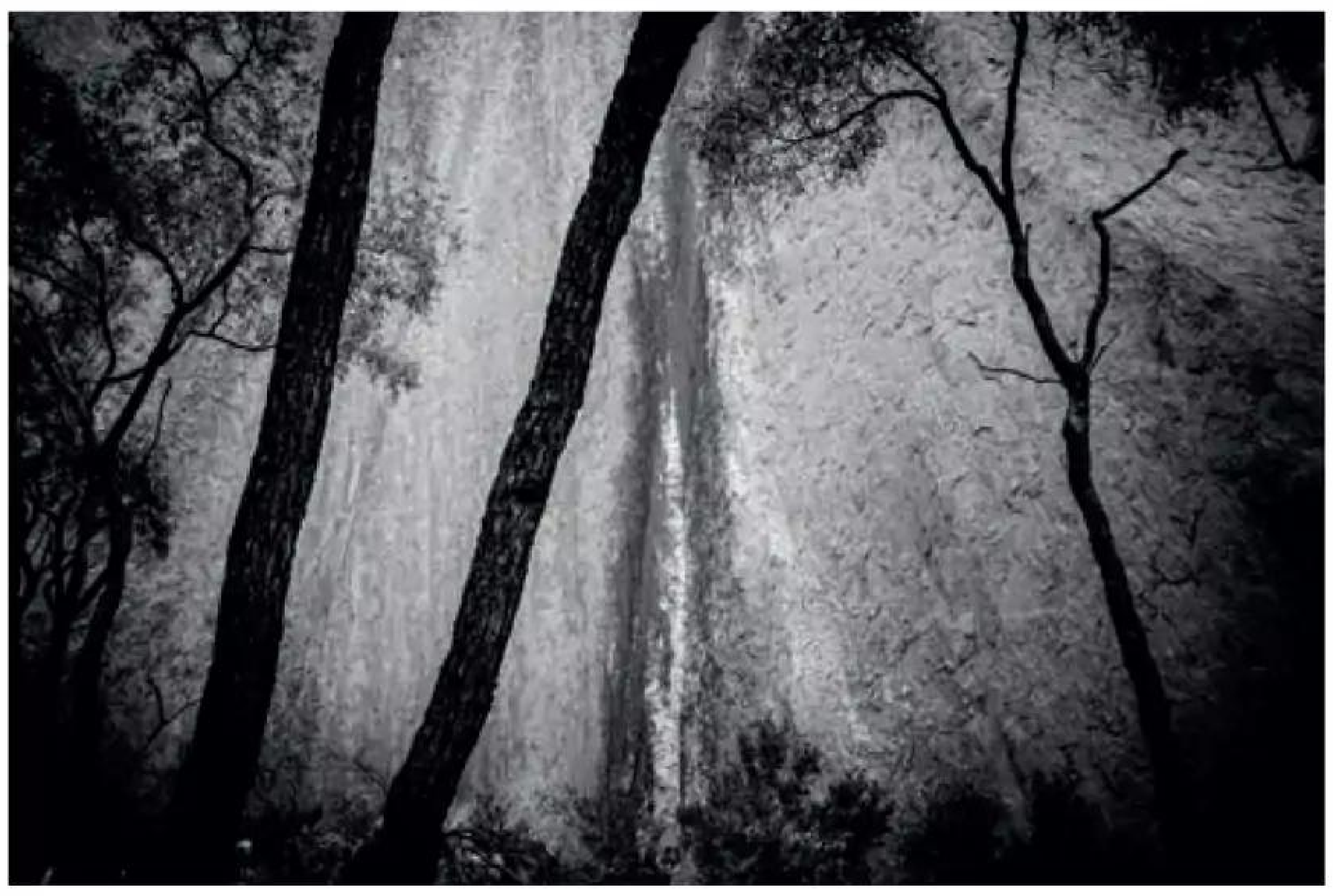


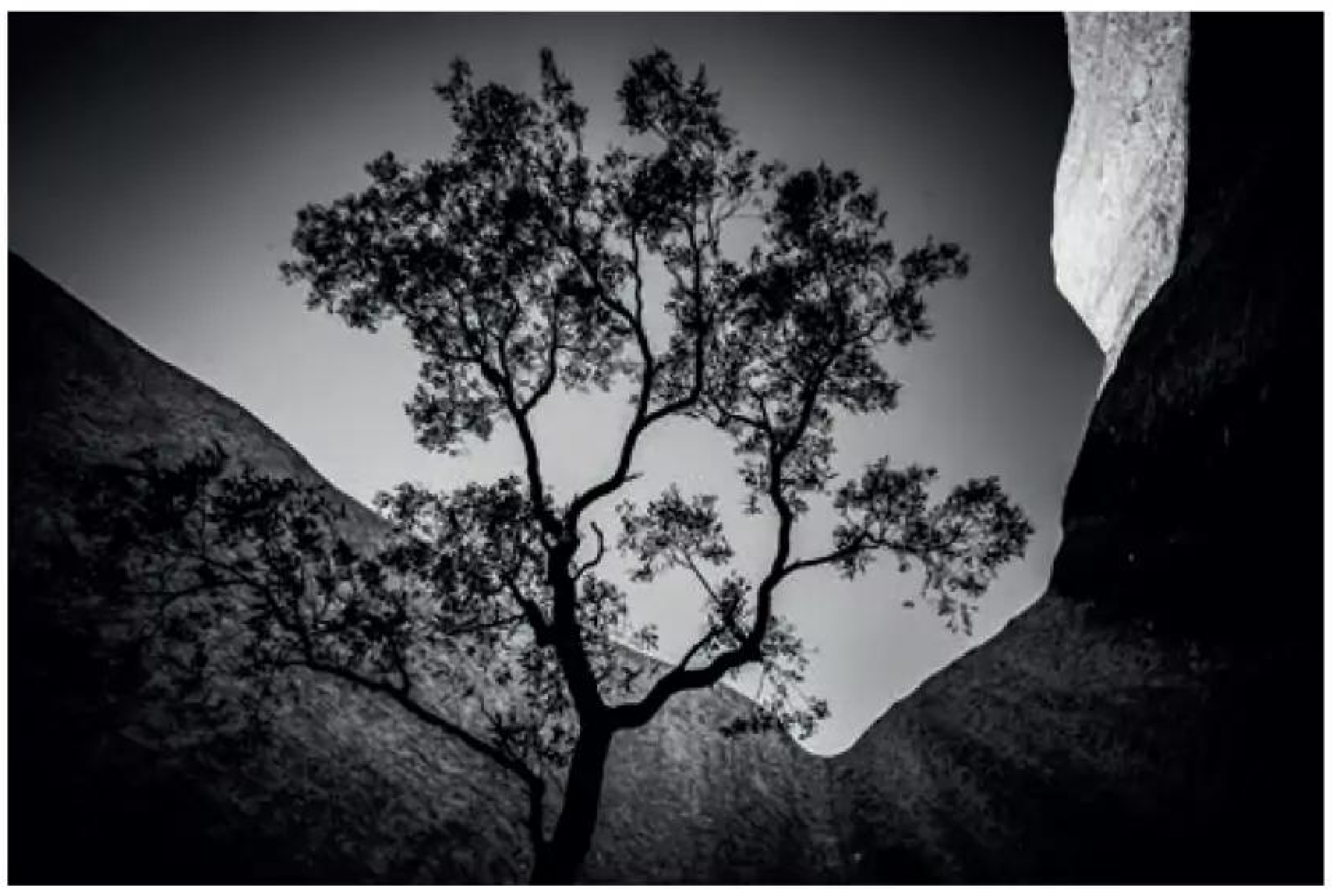
RUNNER-UP

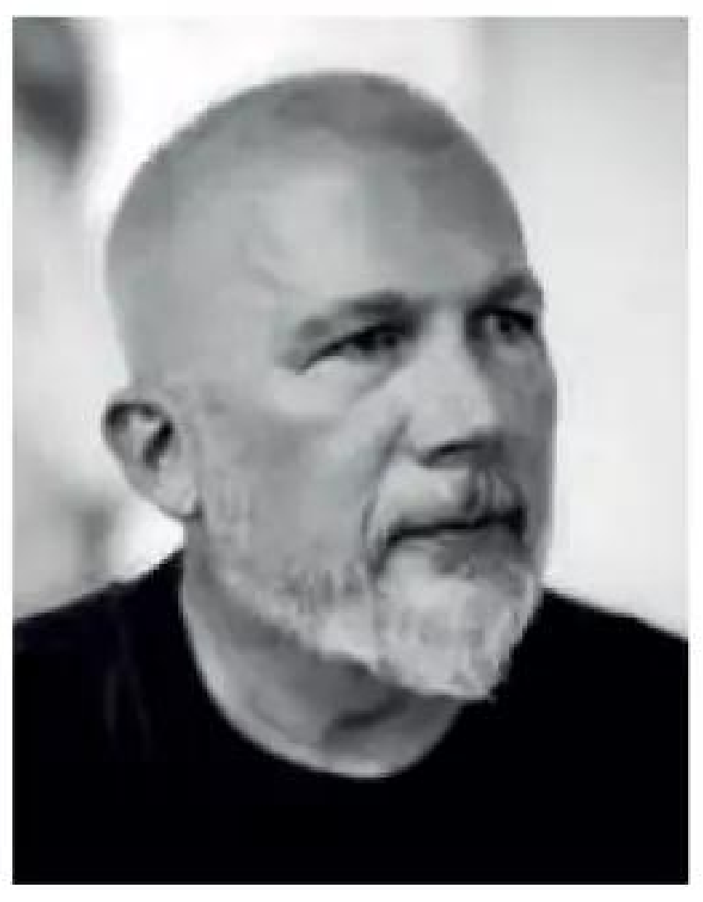
LANDSCAPE











PAUL COLLIS

@manictravels

ULURU IN MONOCHROME

PAUL Collis says he's always been drawn to photography, but it's only in the past four years that it's become something more meaningful: a way to slow down, stay grounded, and manage PTSD and depression.

"The act of creating images has become a mindful practice, helping me reconnect with the world and with others," he says.

His black and white series *Uluru in Monochrome* was captured in May 2025, on his first visit to the iconic site.

"I challenged myself to move beyond the familiar reds, and capture something quieter: Uluru's strength and stillness," he explains.

"I found that stripping away colour slowed the process of image-making and in that stillness the landscape revealed something deeper."

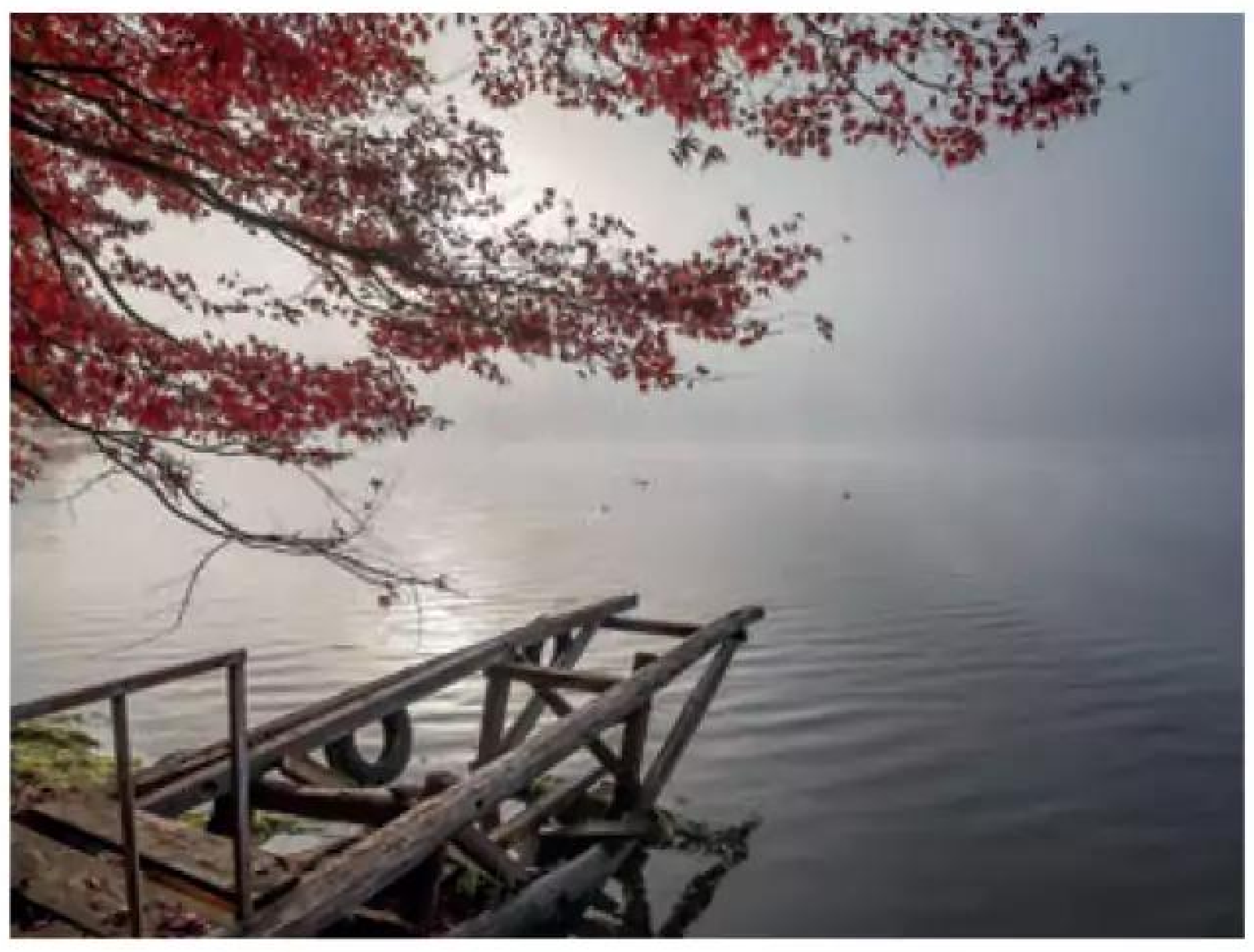
WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

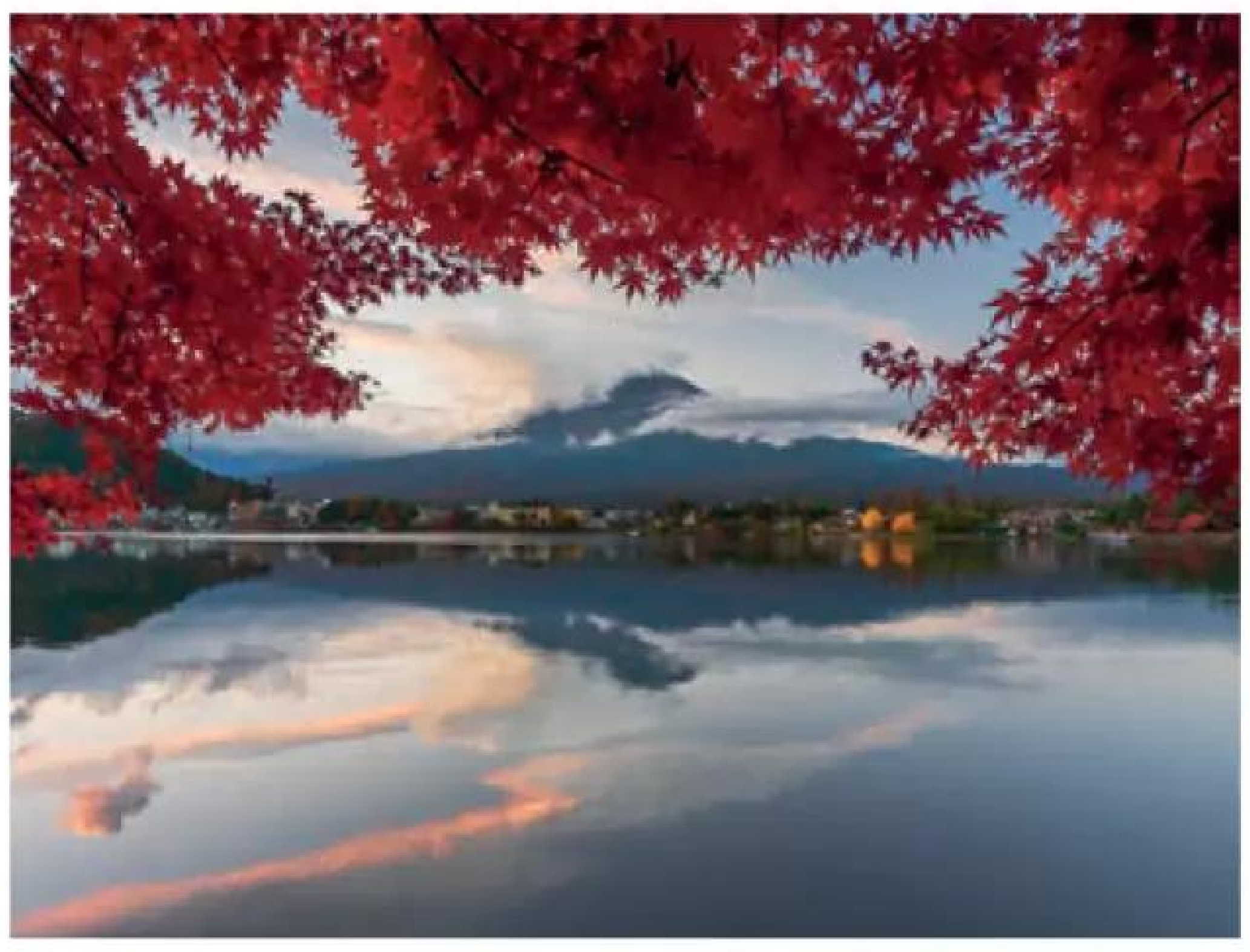
STEVE AND ANN TOON: We're very much drawn to evocative images that compel the viewer through mood and atmosphere; where the photographer is not simply recording a landscape in a moment, but is setting out to communicate something more expressive and meaningful about a place, as in Paul's haunting Uluru study. We applaud this photographer for his bold and confident choice to shoot an iconic subject in black and white that's been photographed many, many times before and is renowned for its rich, vivid colour palette and classic viewpoints. In so doing, the sympathetic framing of Paul's subtle, quiet images pay fitting homage to Uluru's silent, timeless presence in a fresh and compelling way.

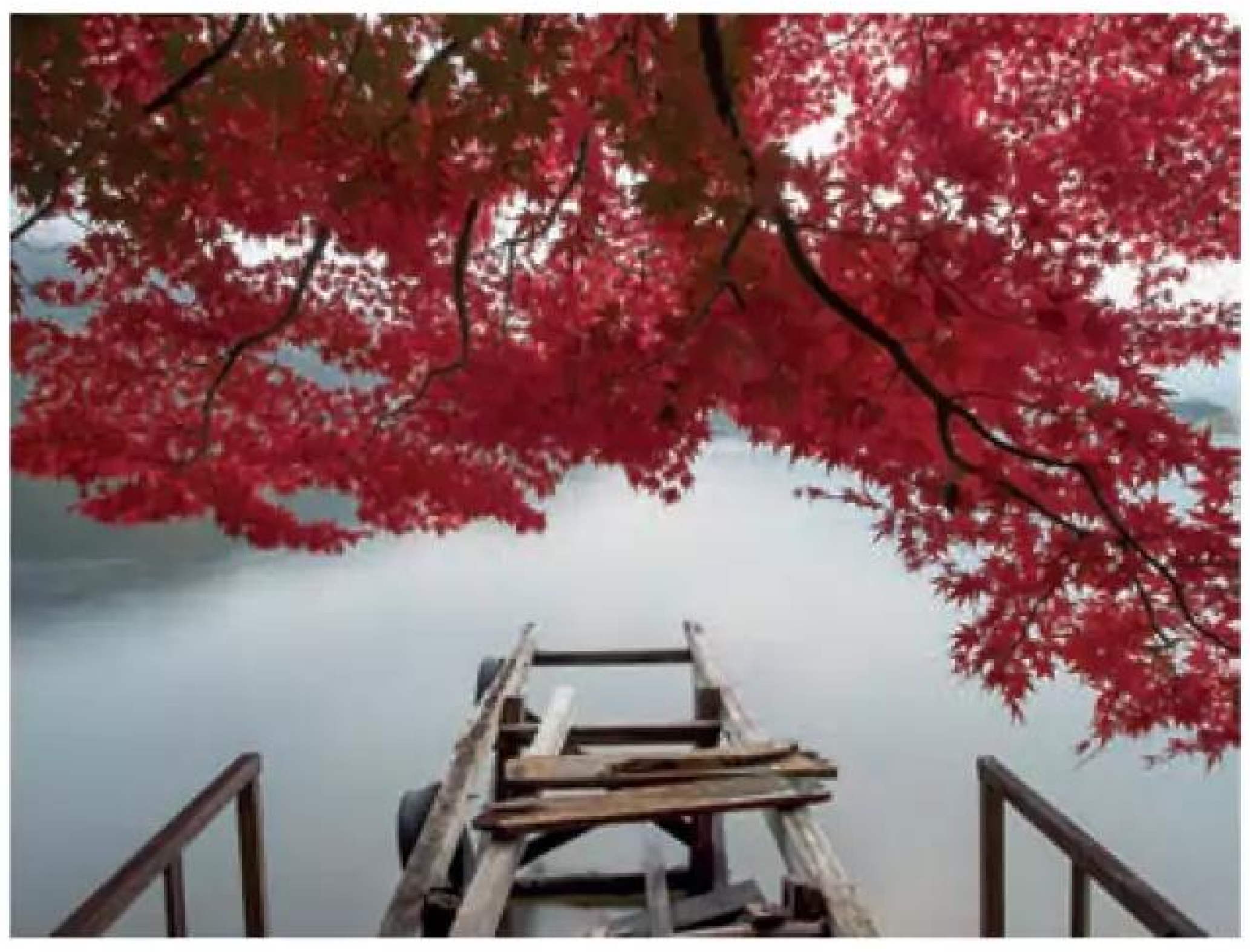
PRIZE: $200 Ted's Cameras voucher.

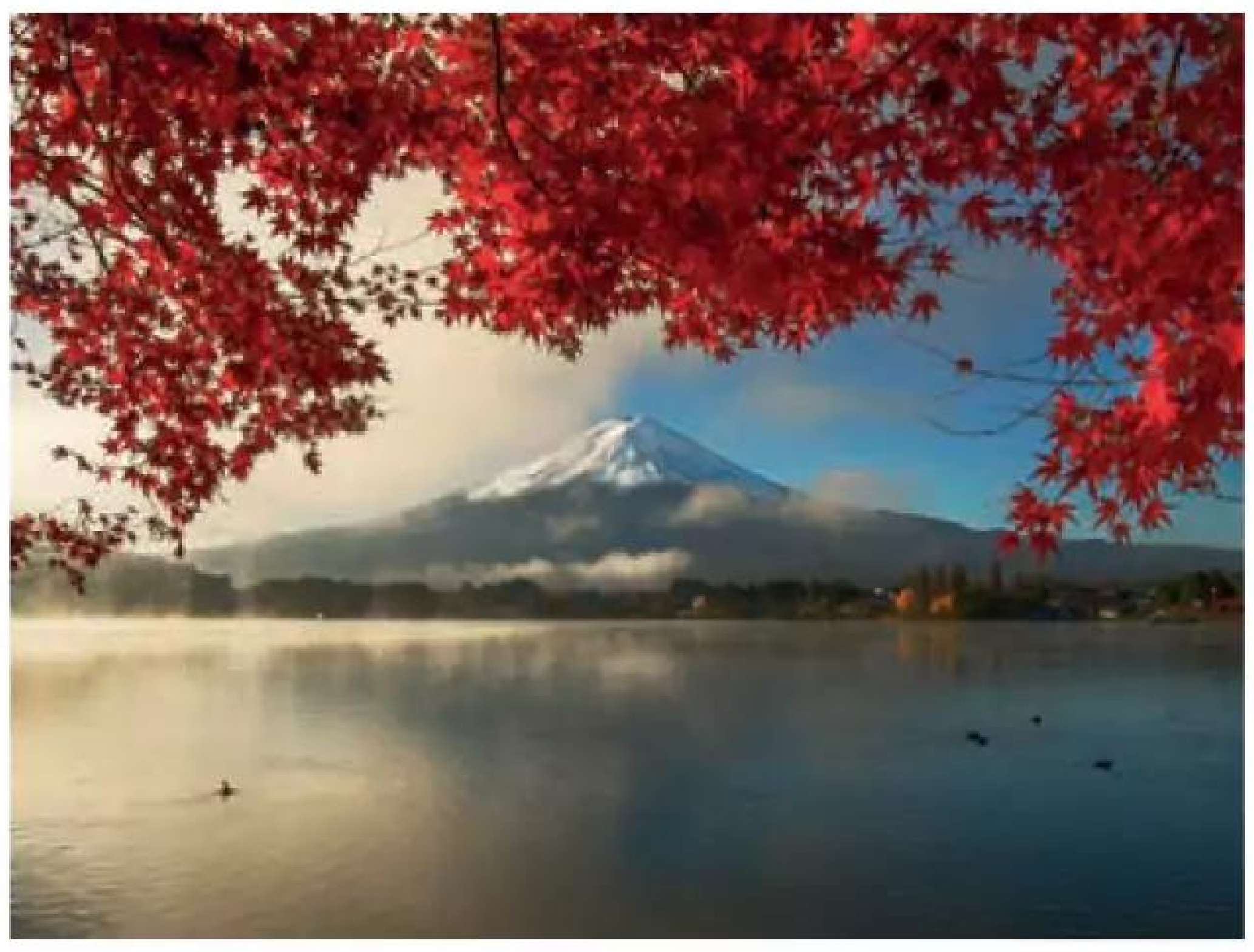
3. MARK WASSELL

UNDER THE MAPLE TREE



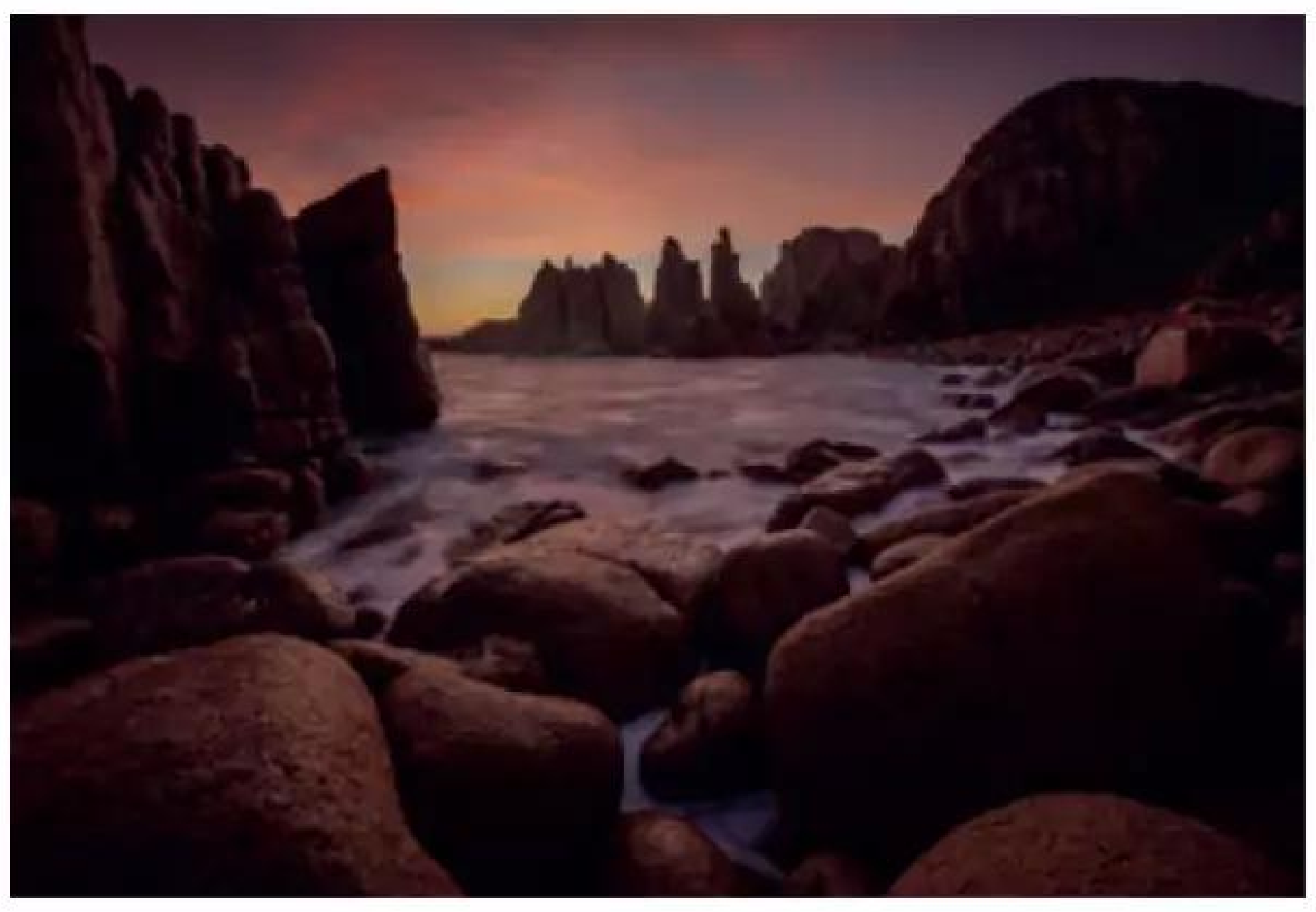


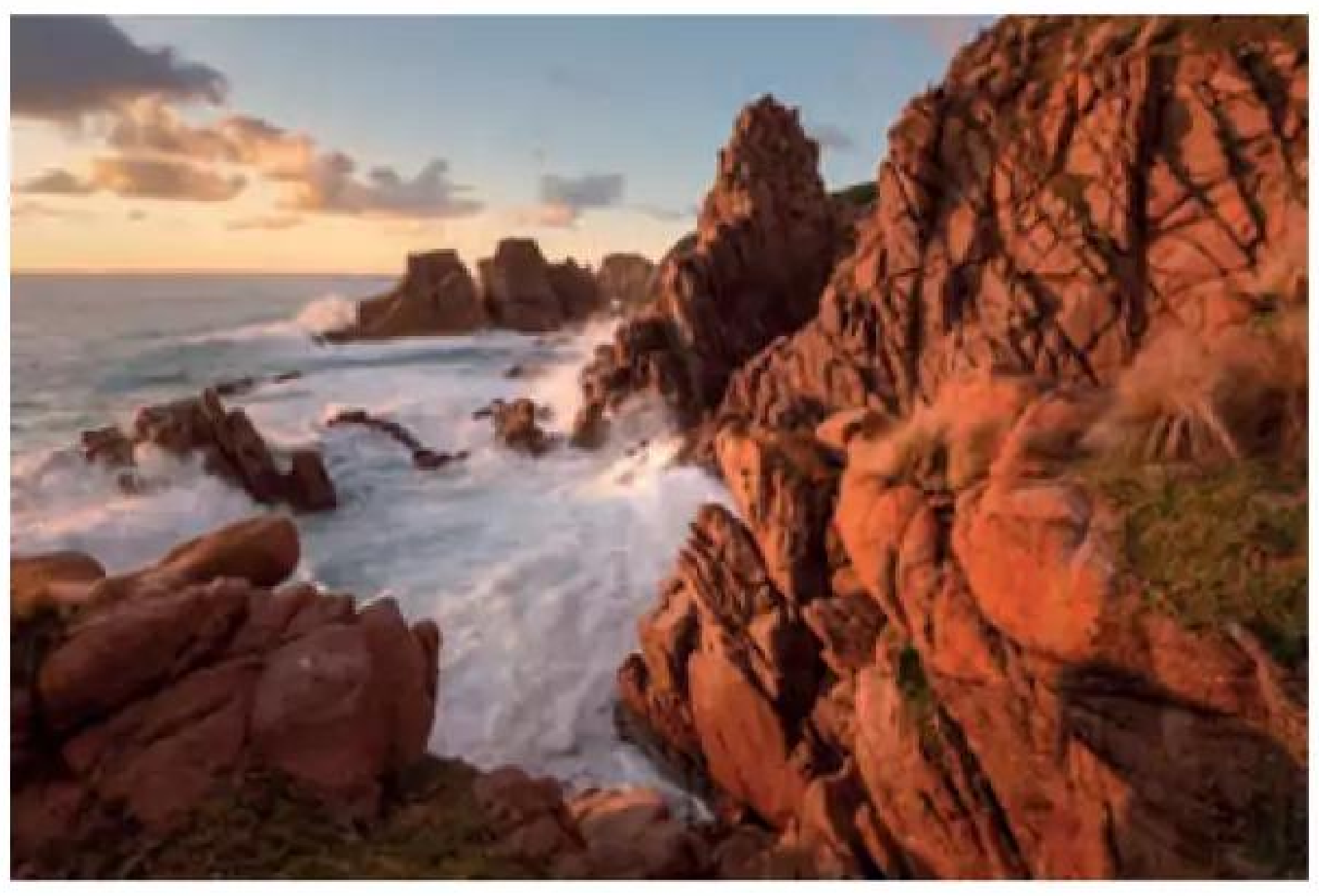


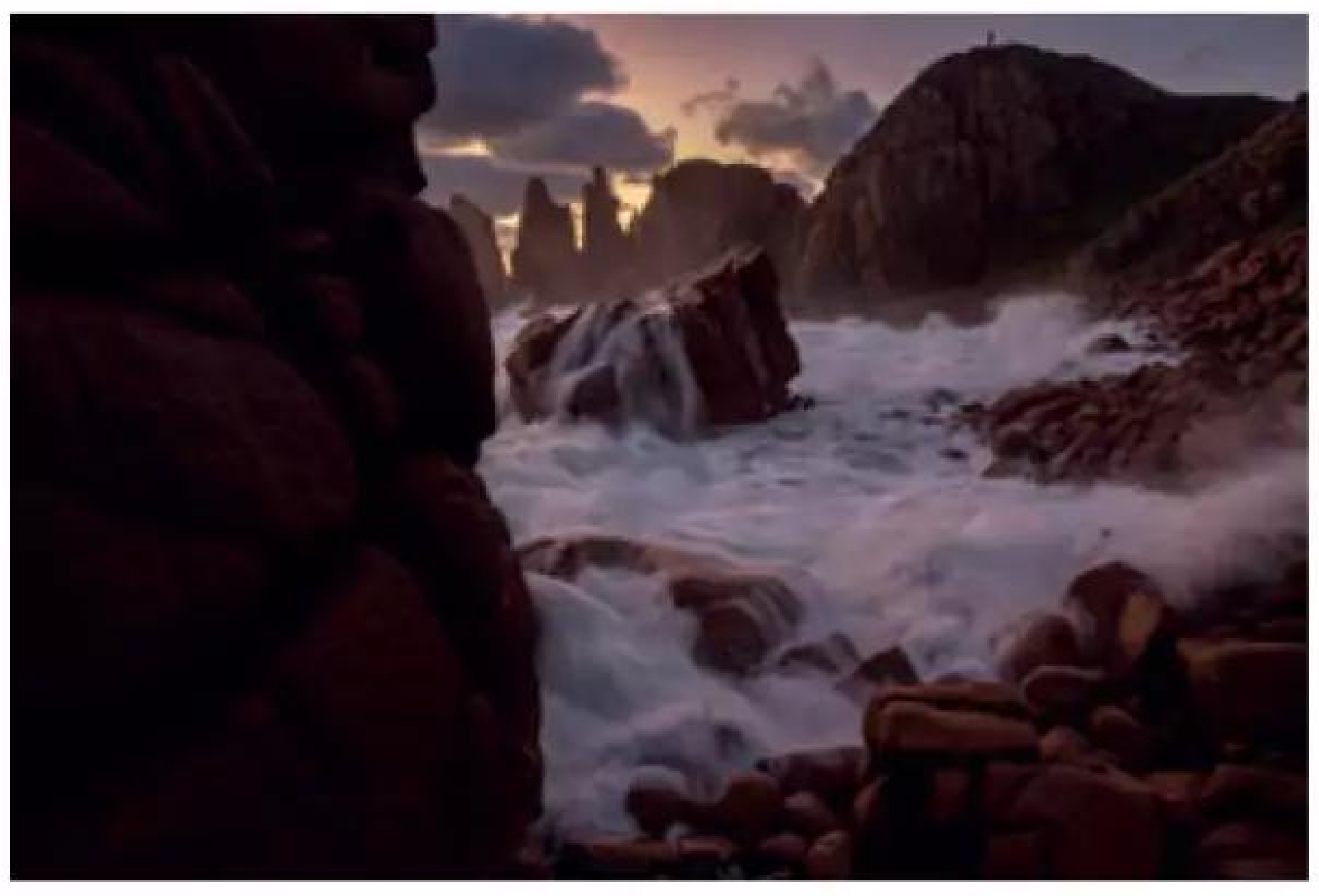


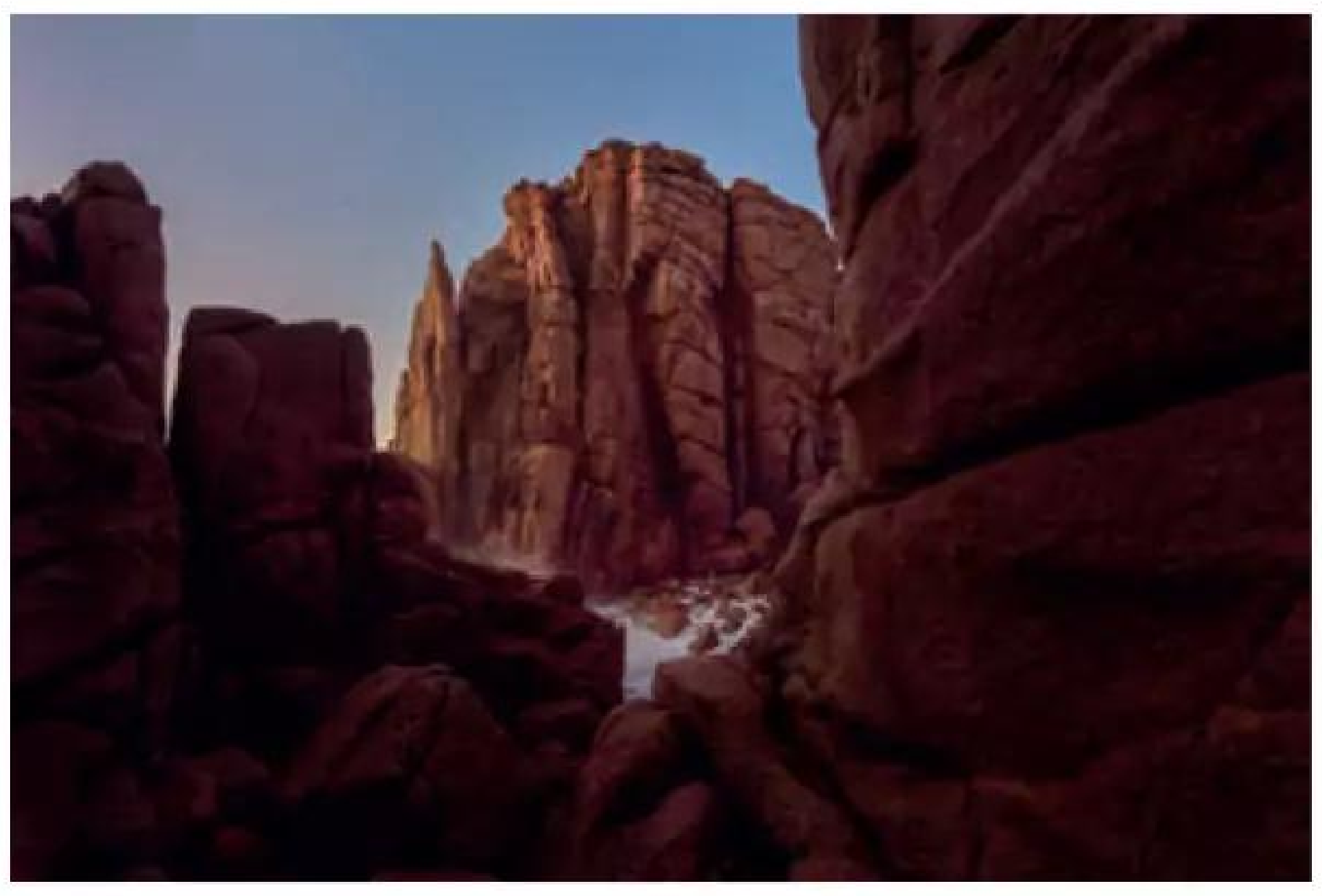
4. TYSON WALDRON

RUGGED PHILLIP ISLAND



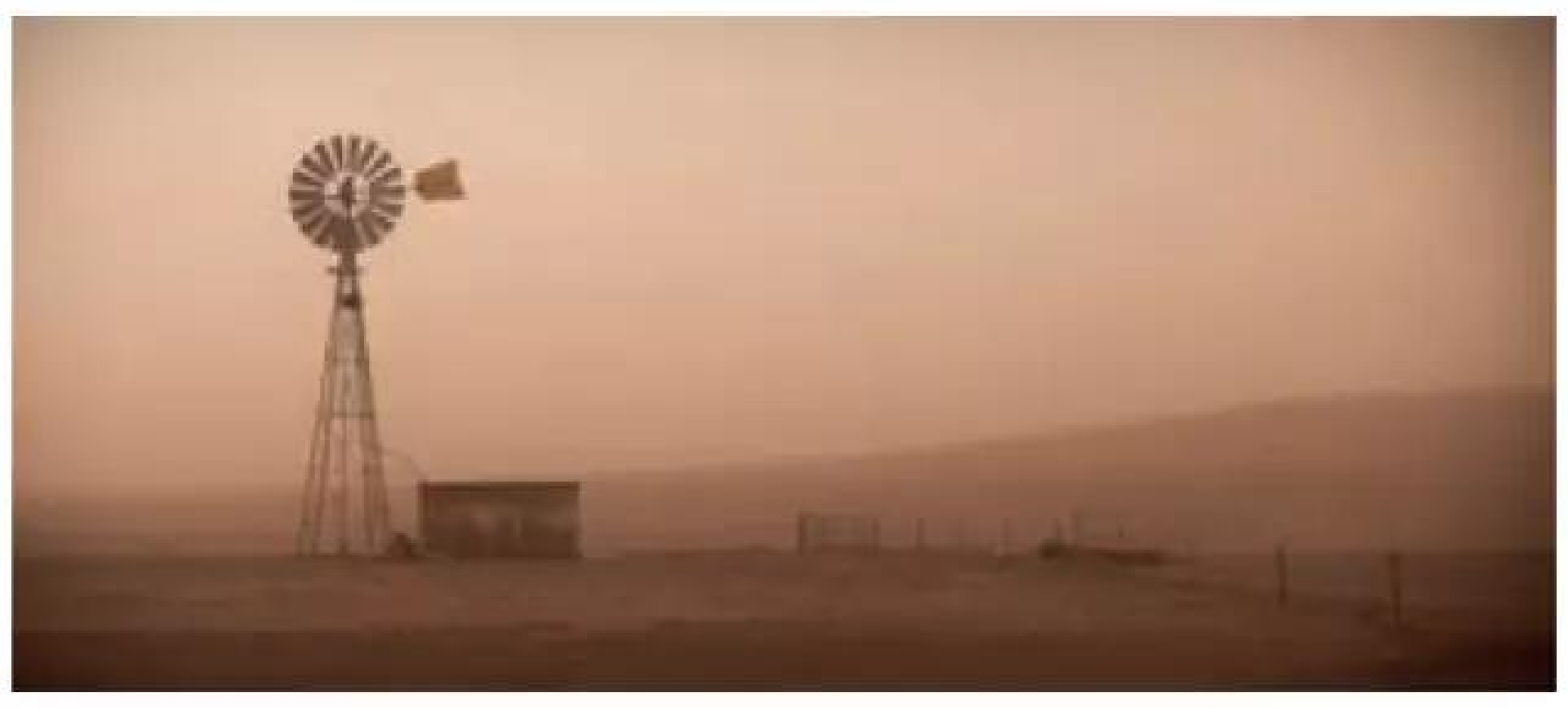


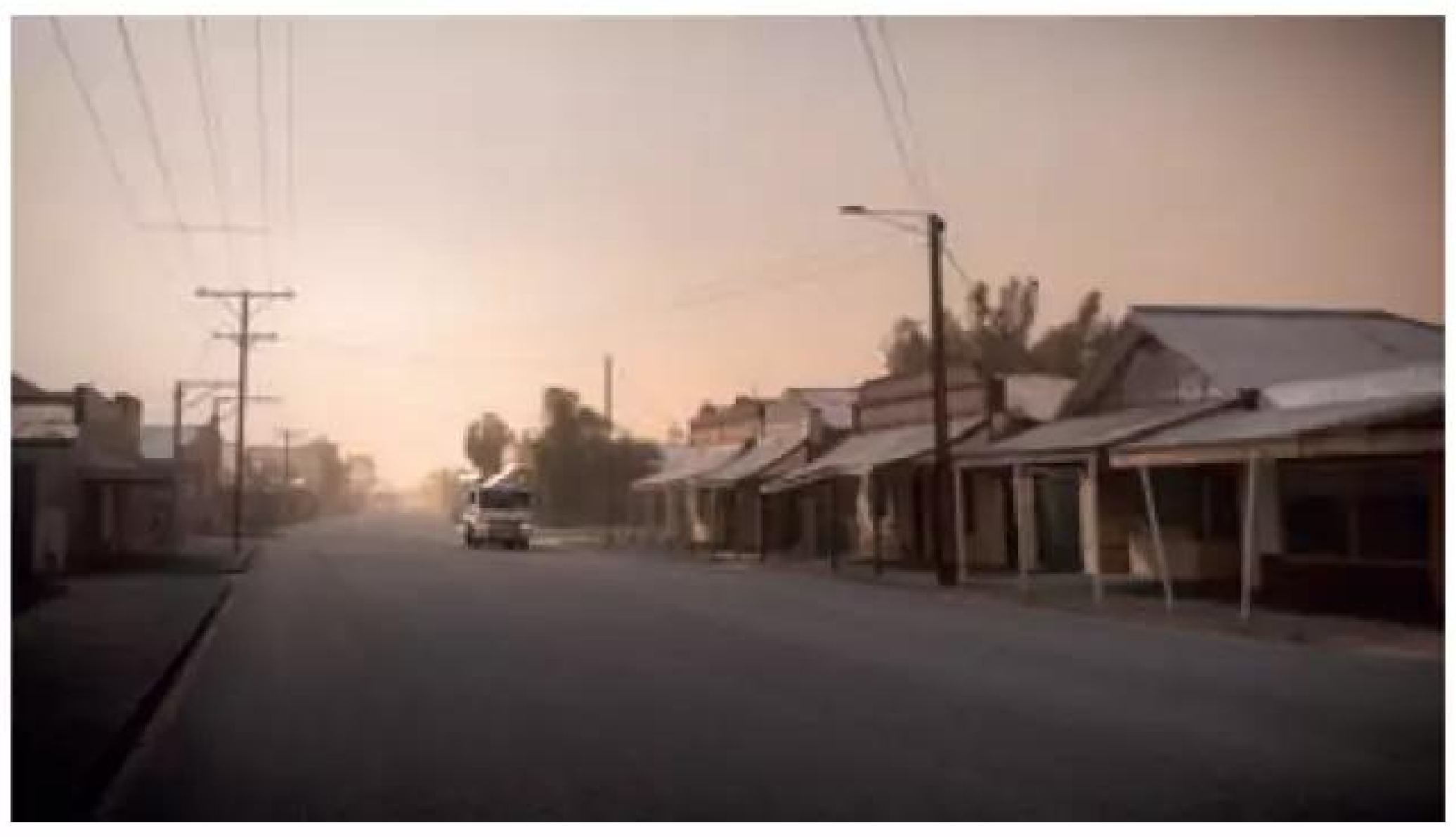


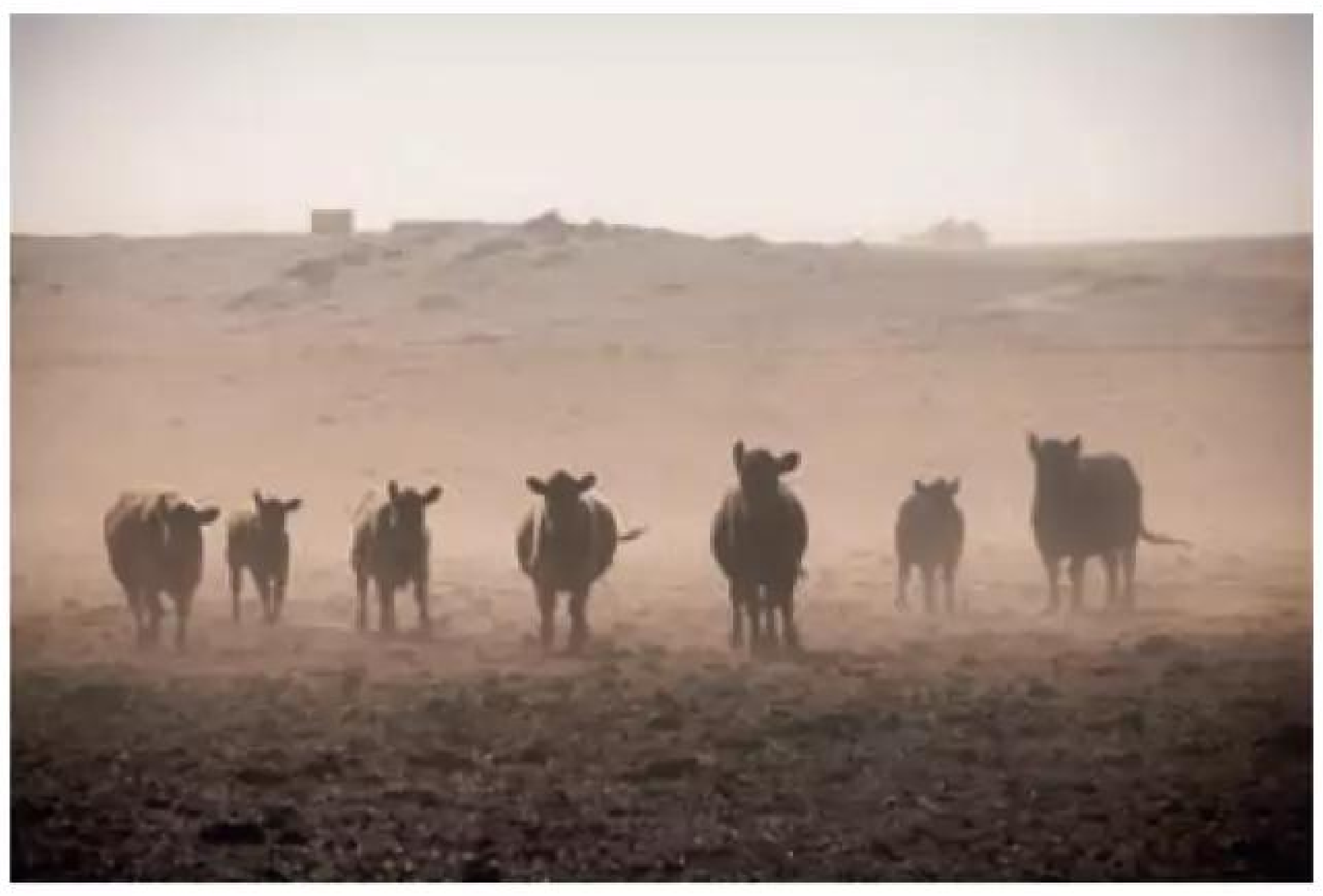


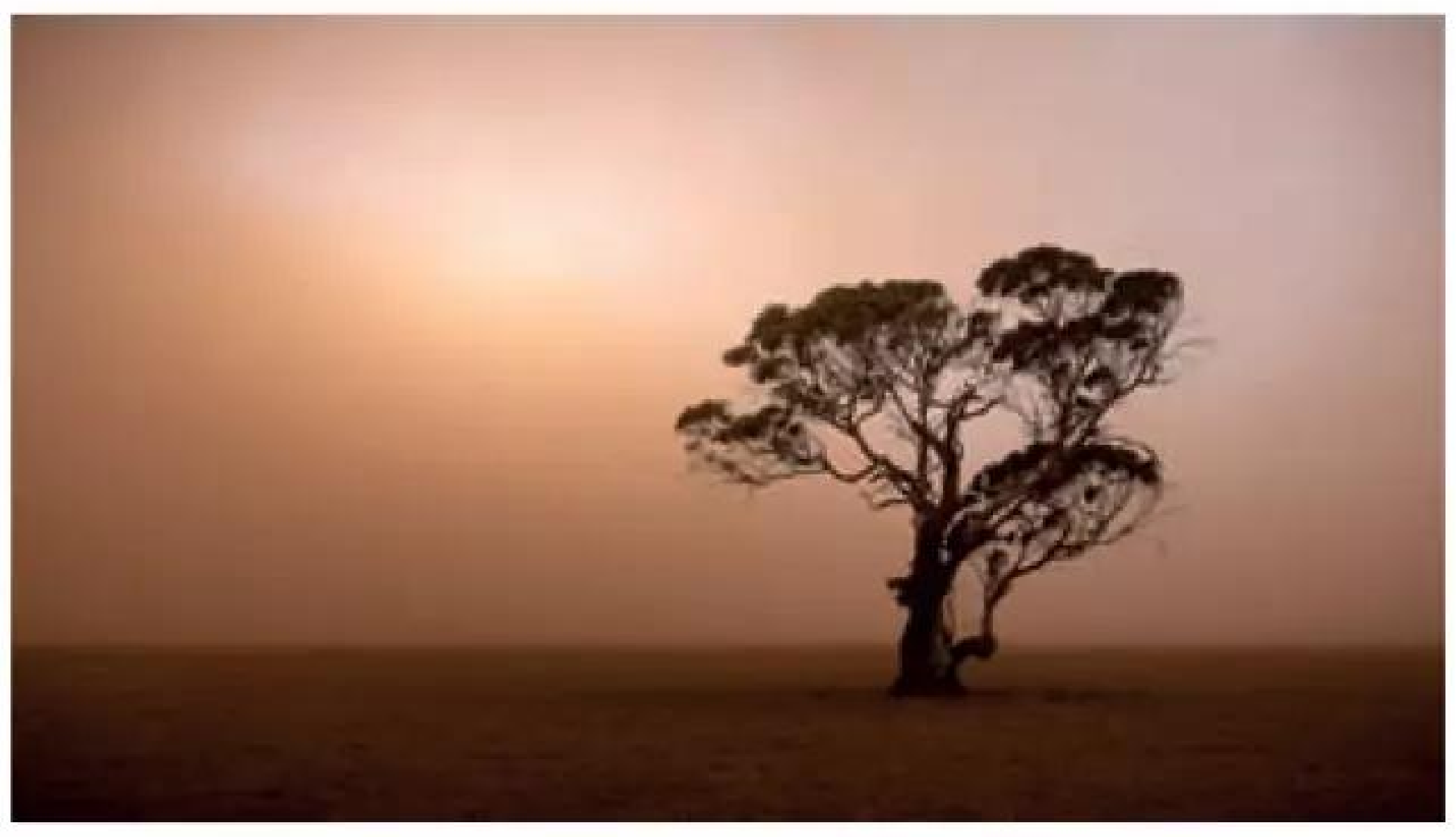
5. BENJAMIN HAMS

ENDURING NATURE

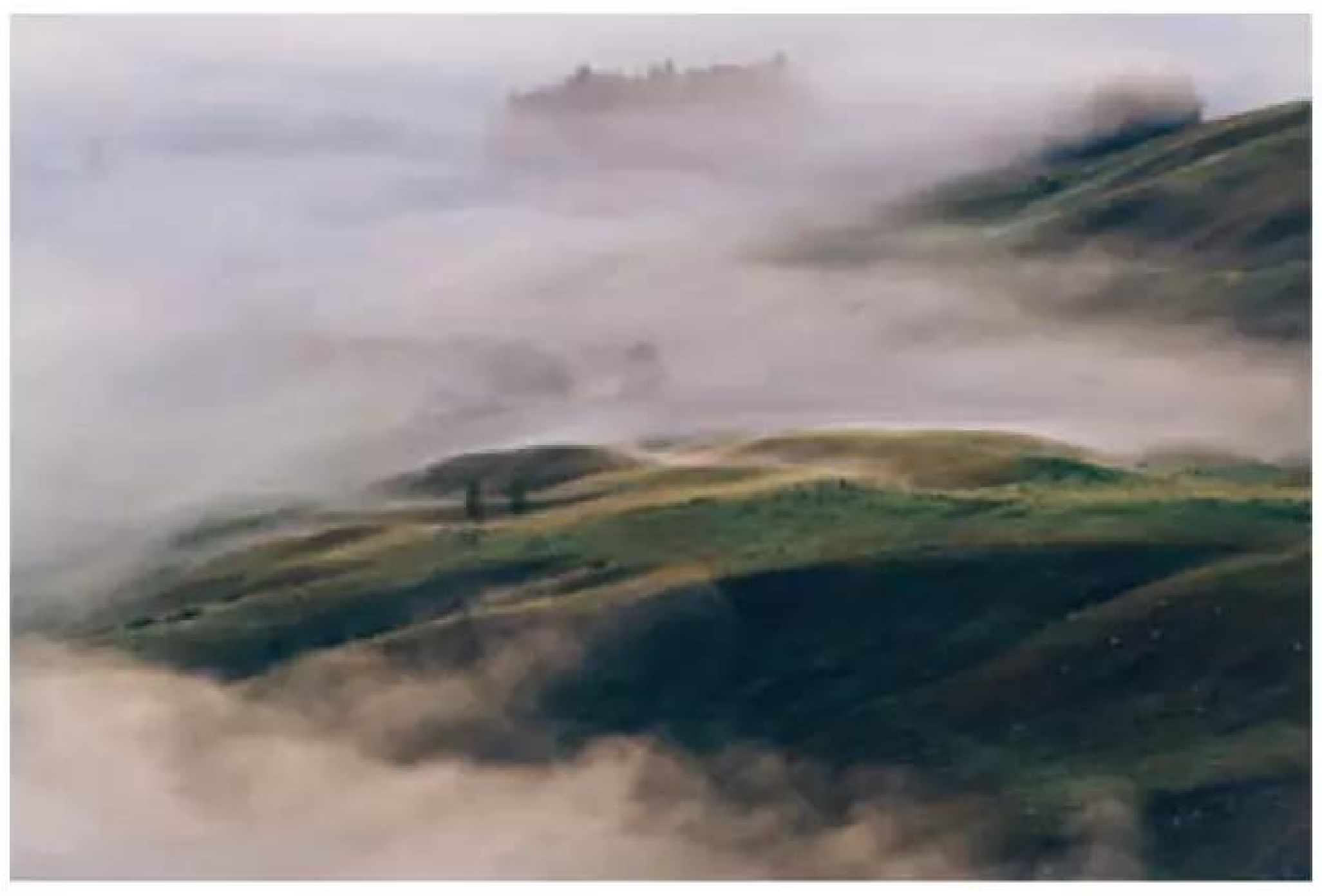


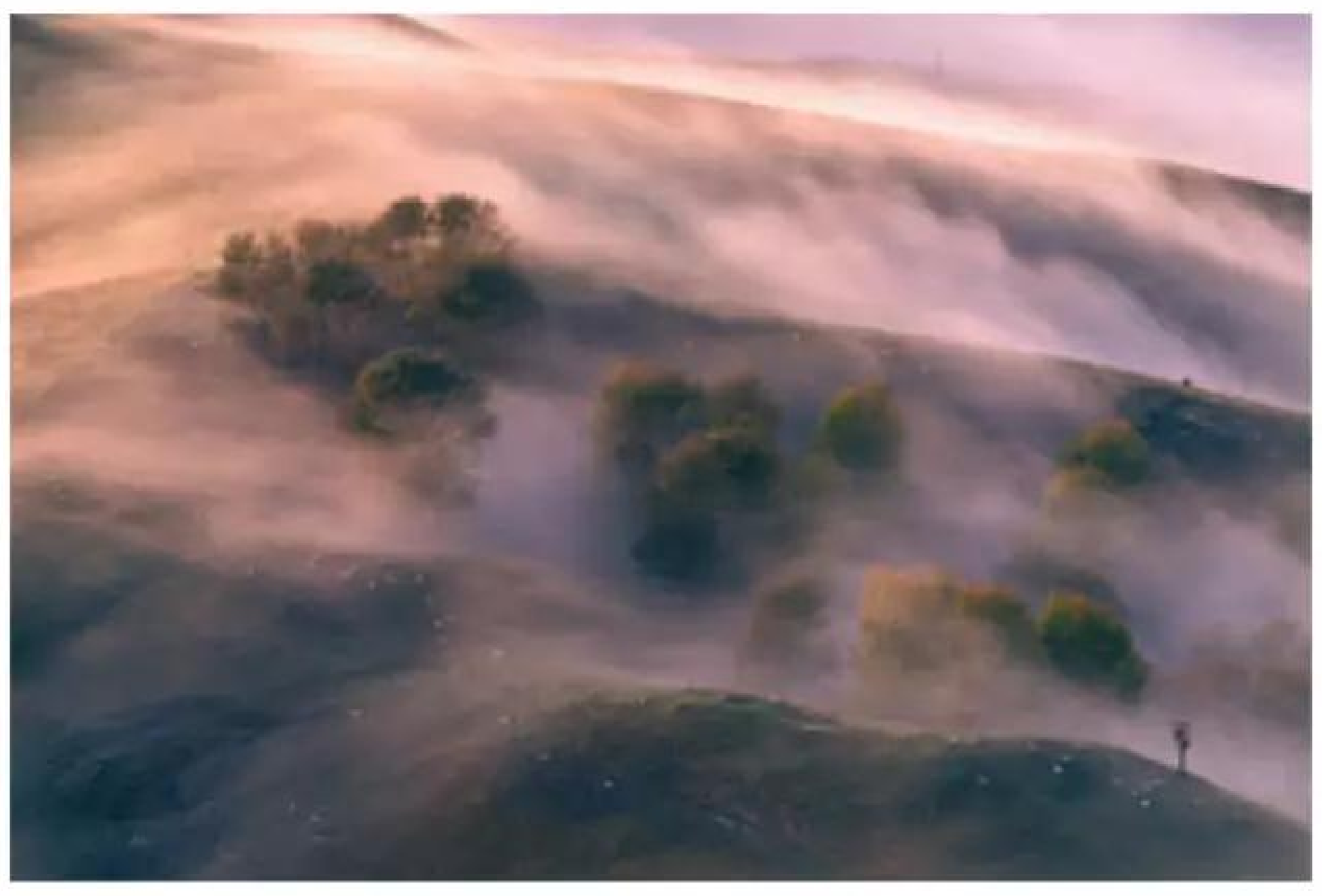


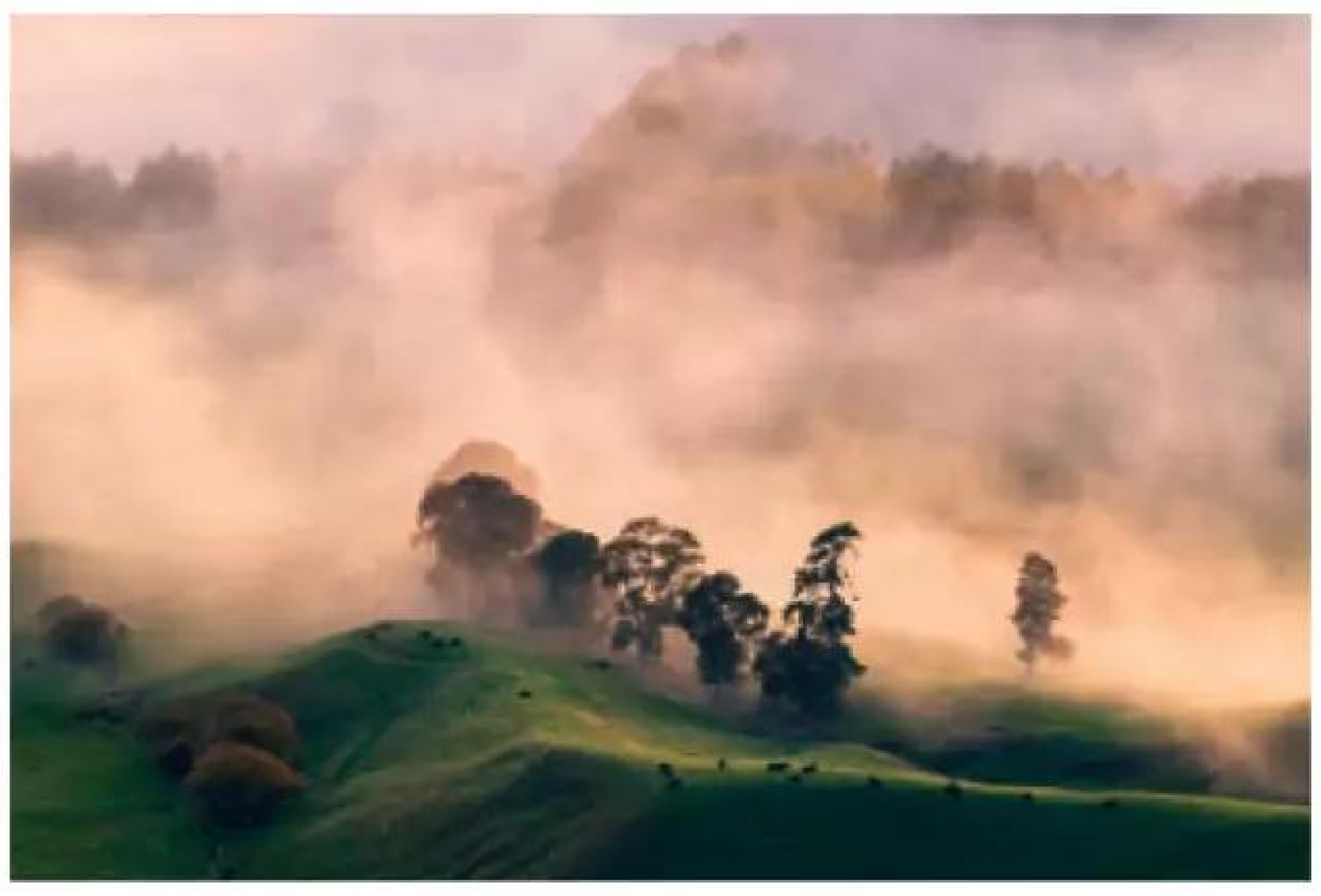


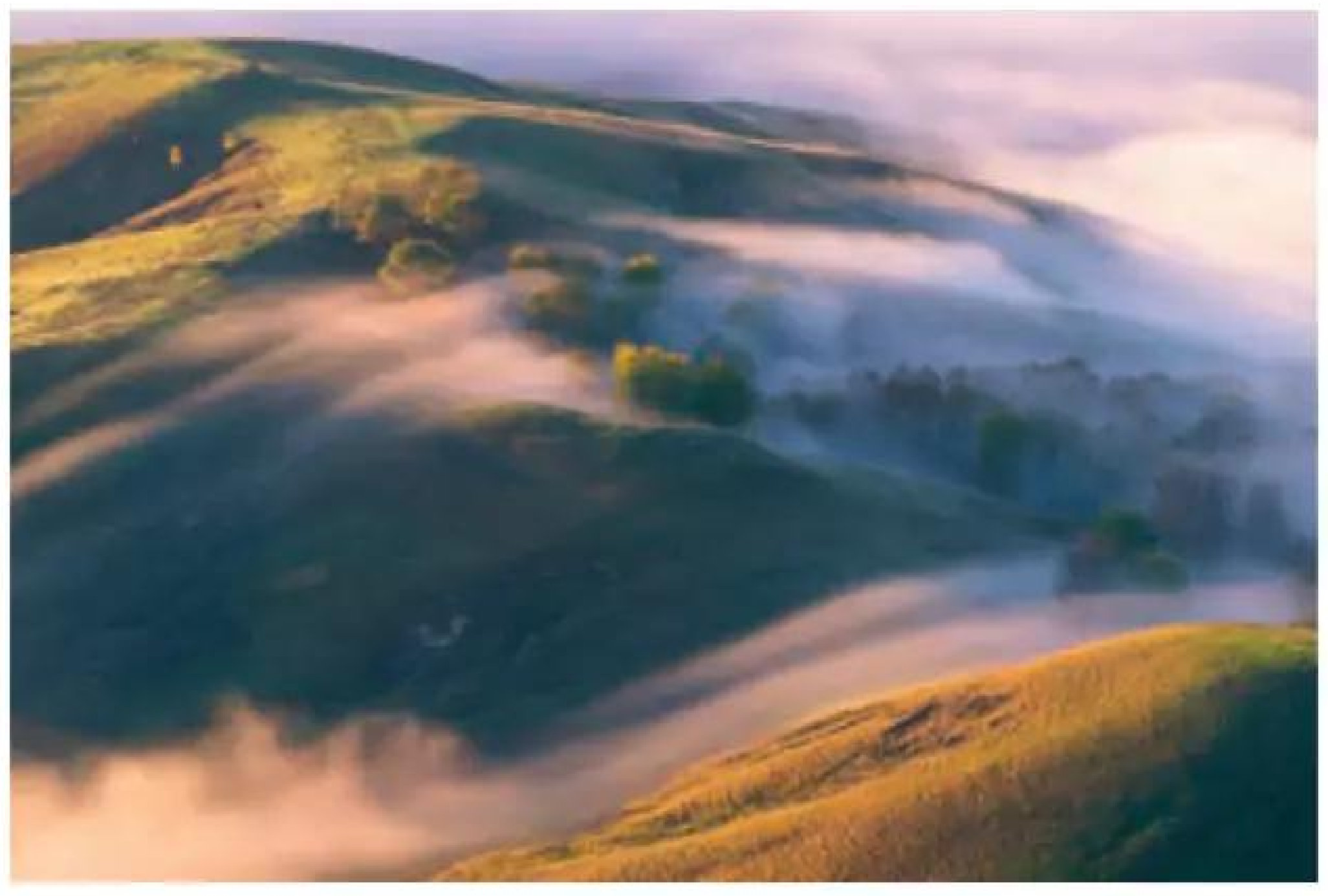


6. CRAIG FORD
WHISPERS OF THE VEIL

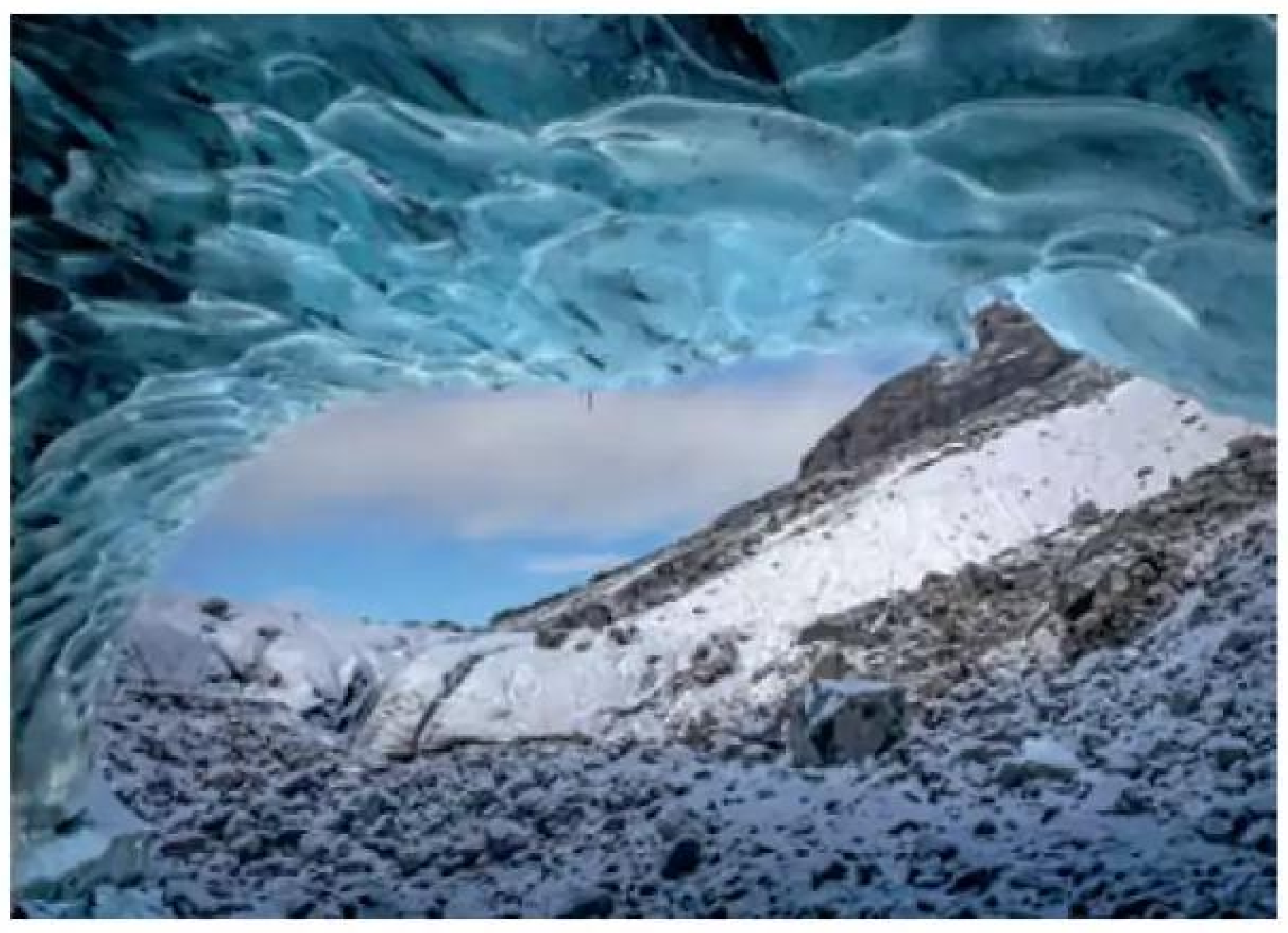


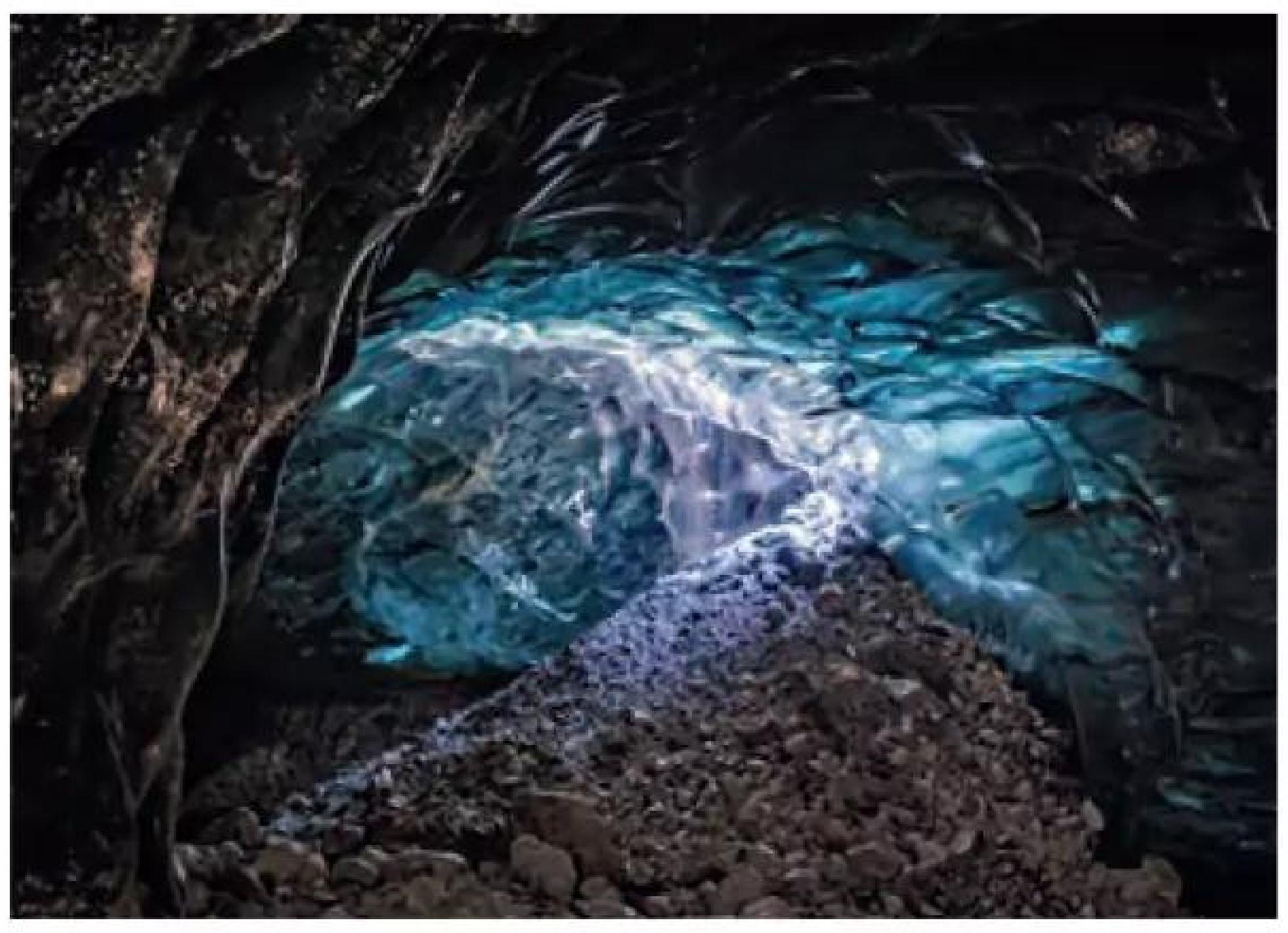


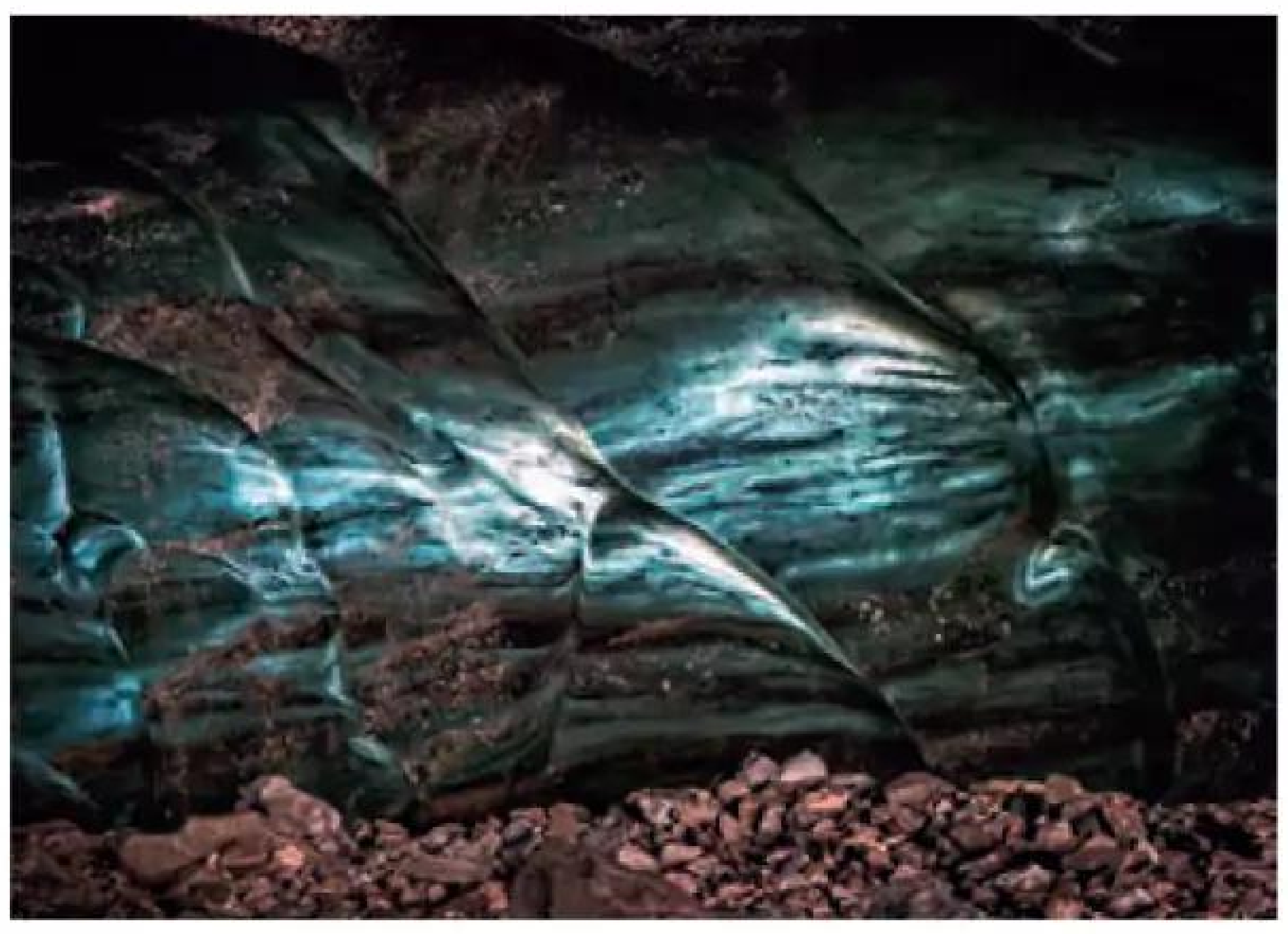


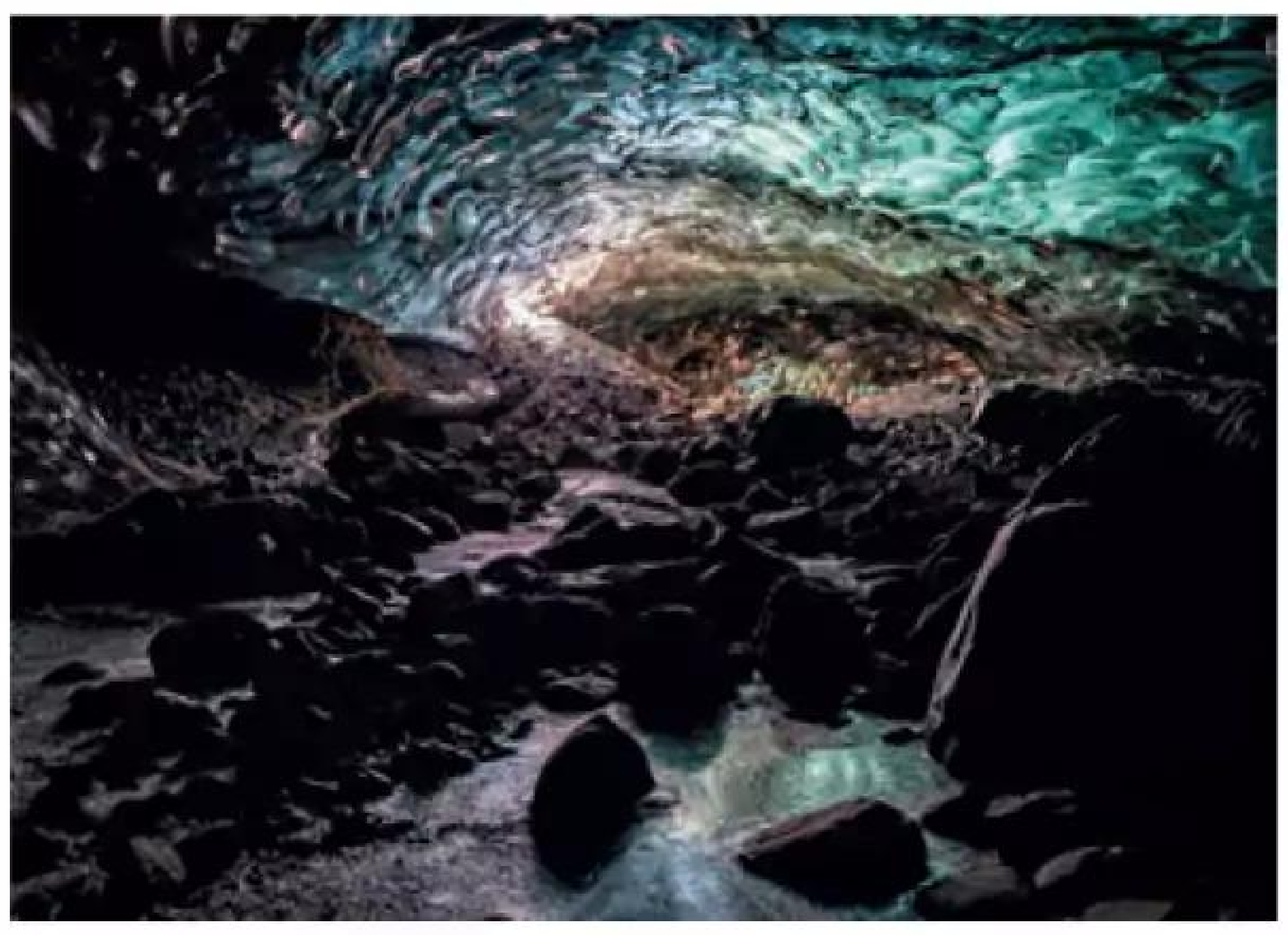


7. ALISON THORBURN
ICE CAVE

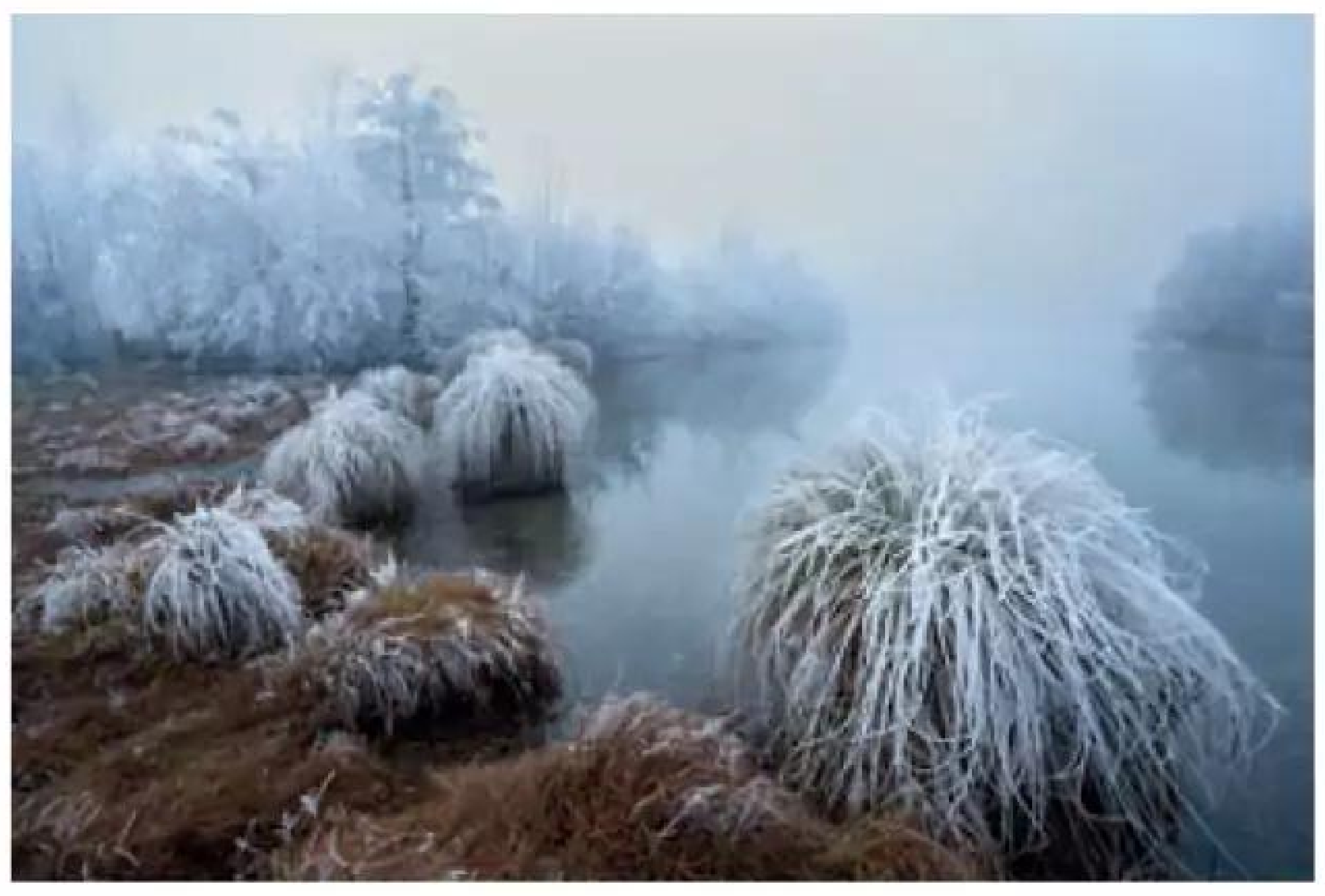


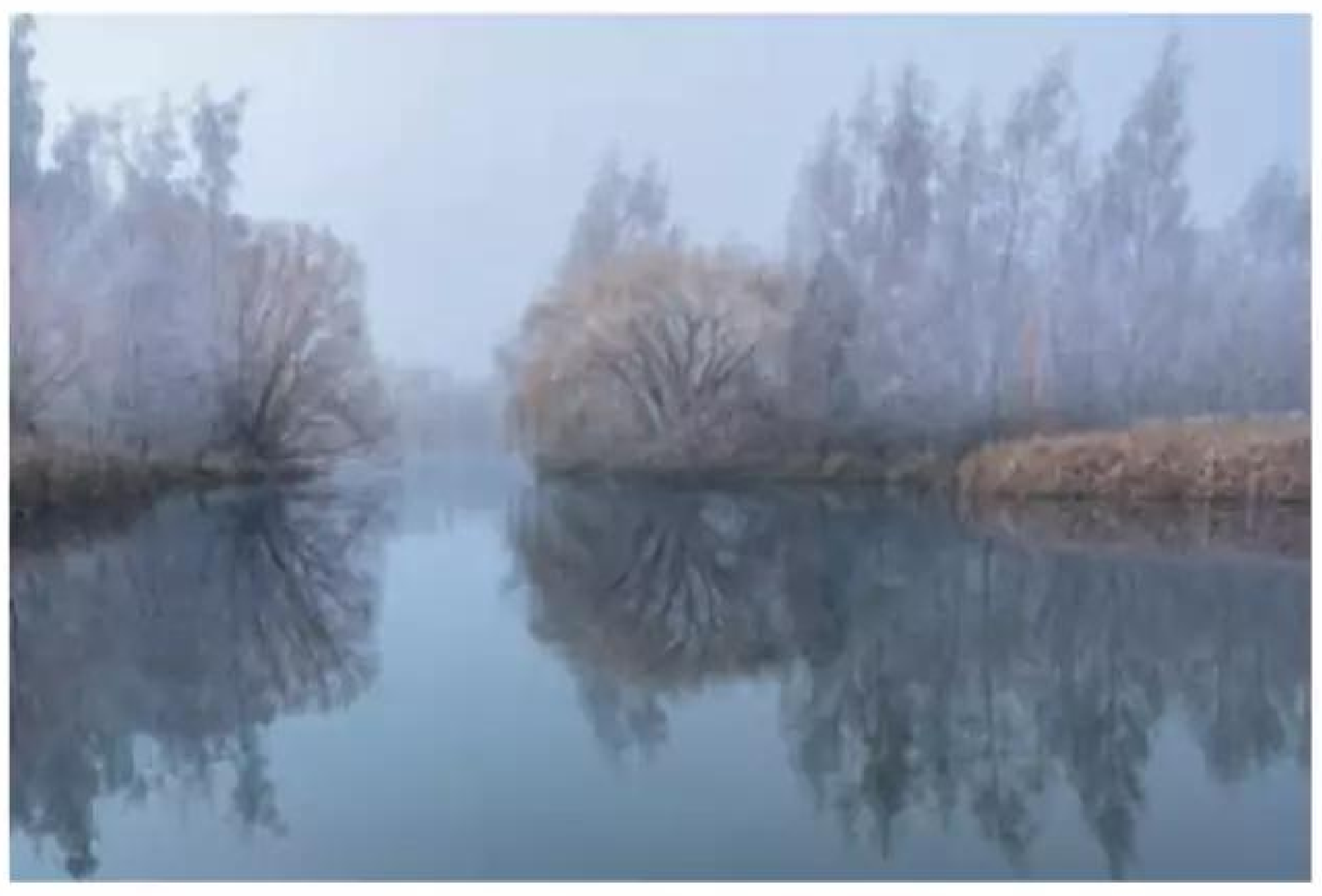


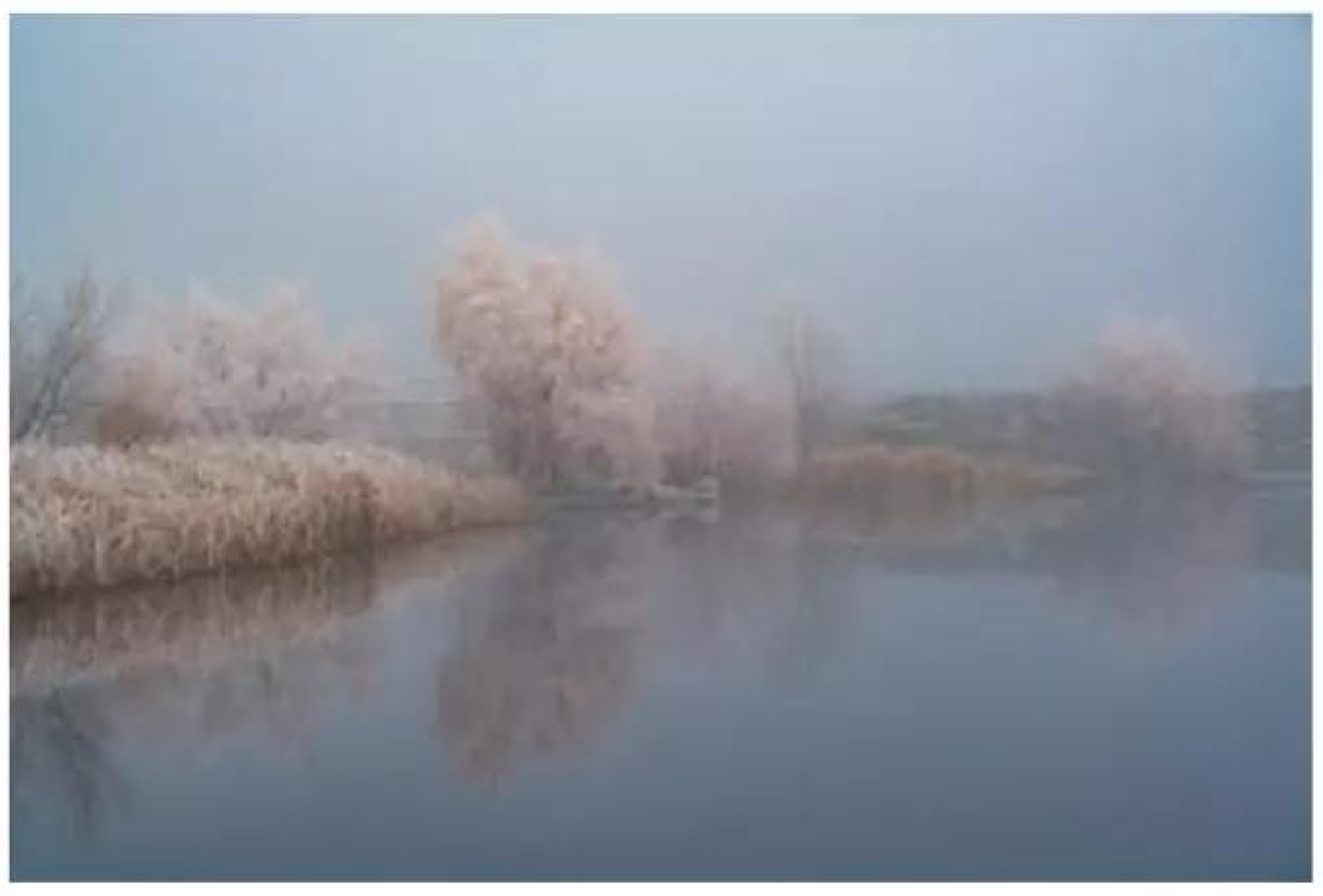


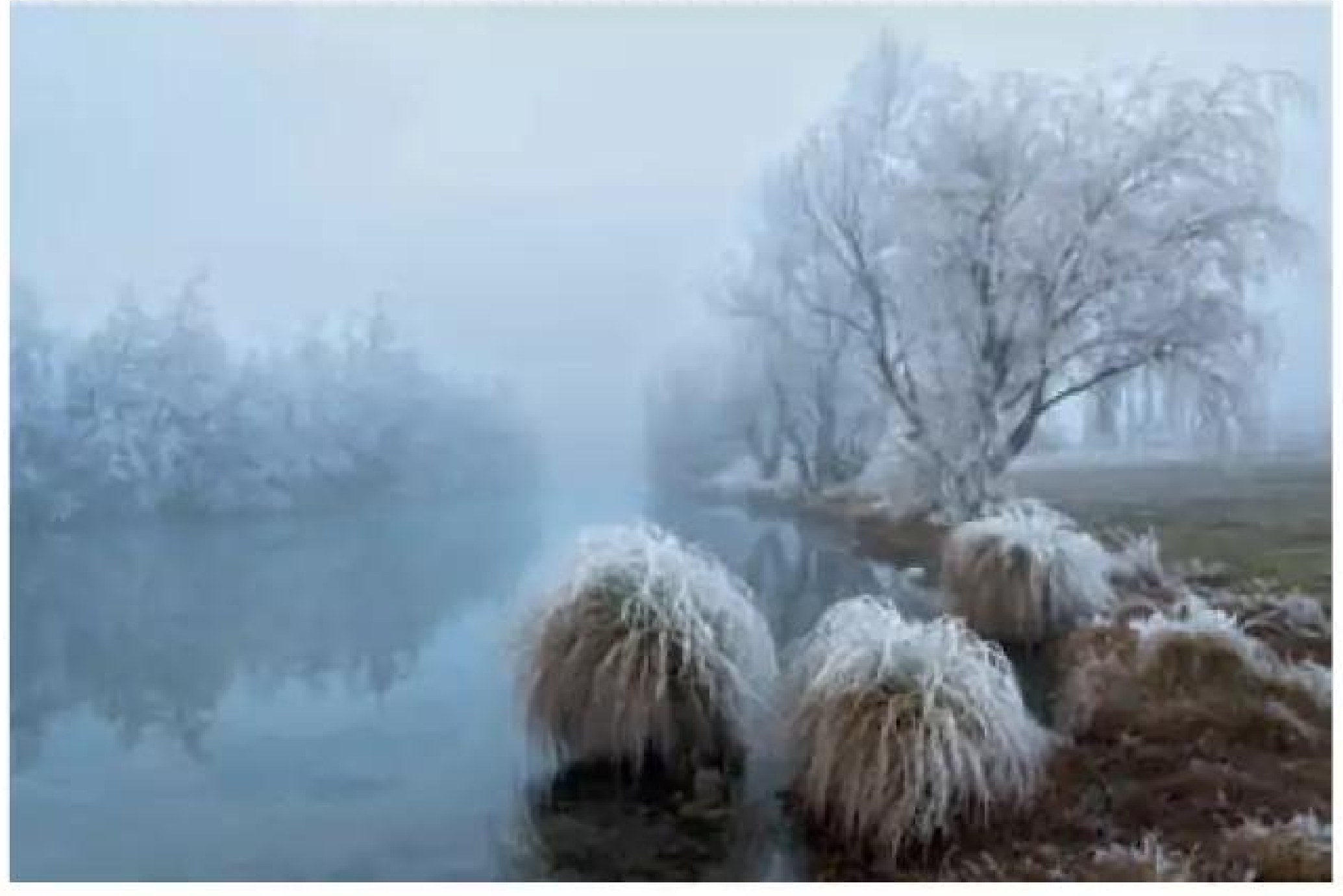


8. DARREN WASSELL
FROZEN IN TIME



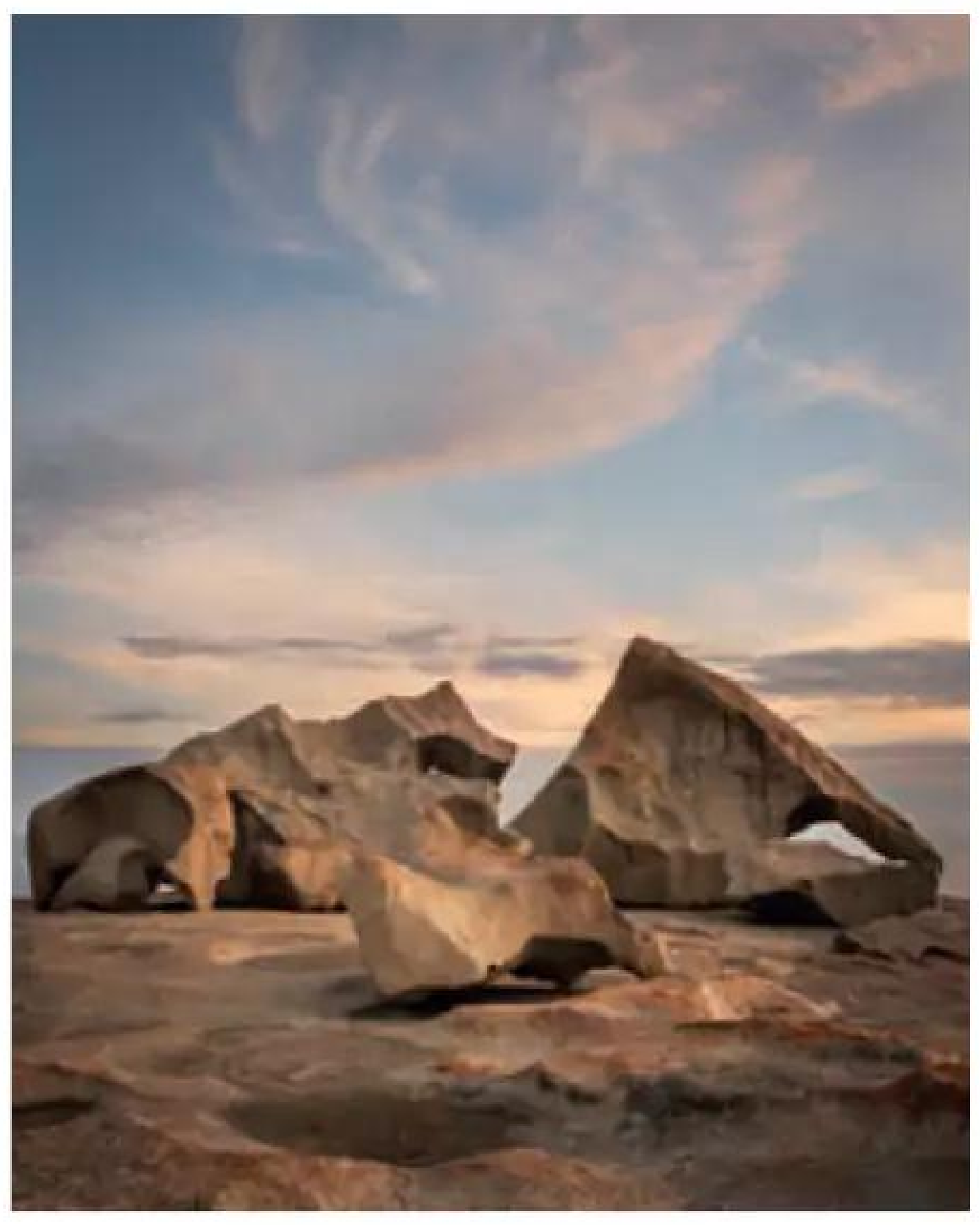


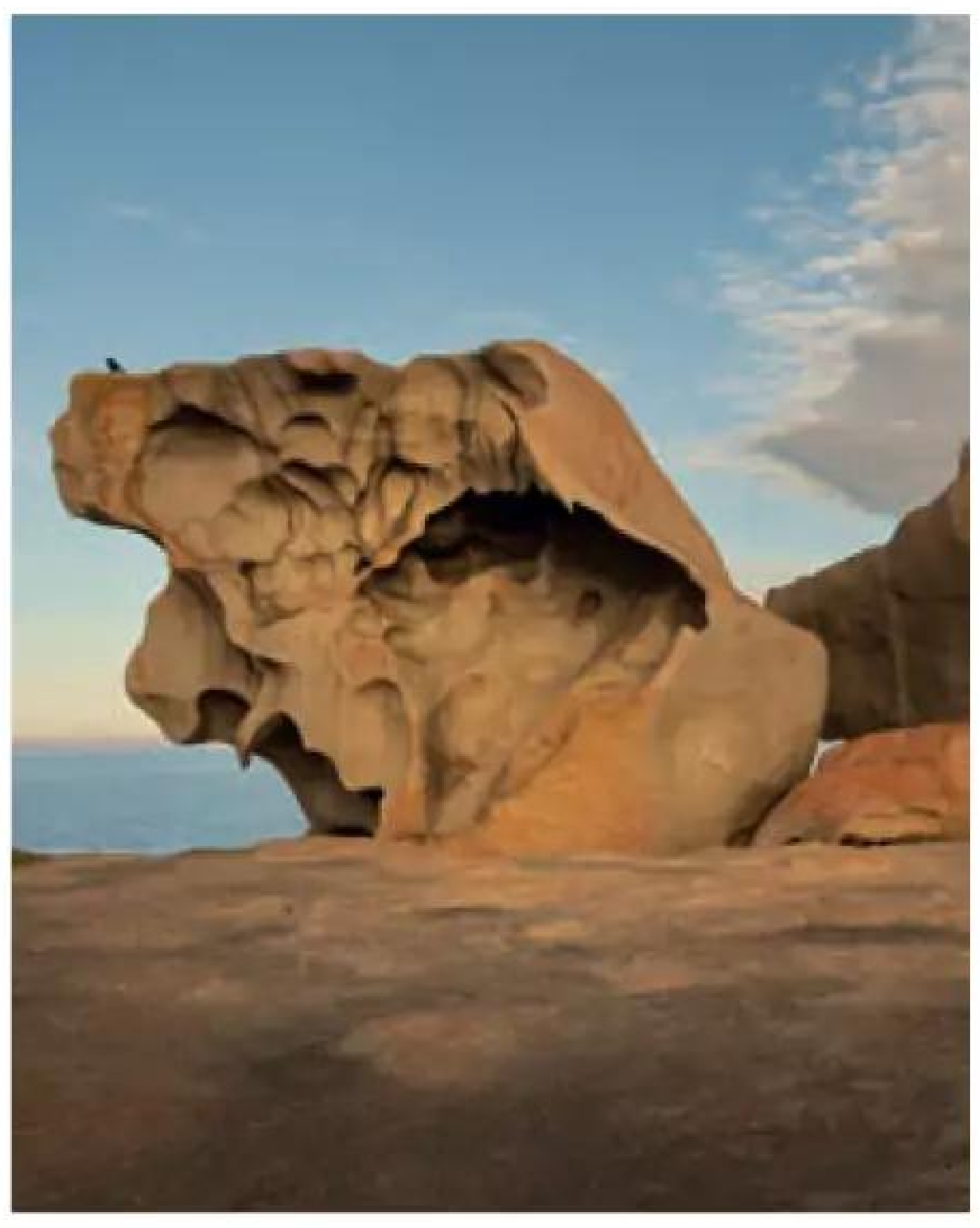


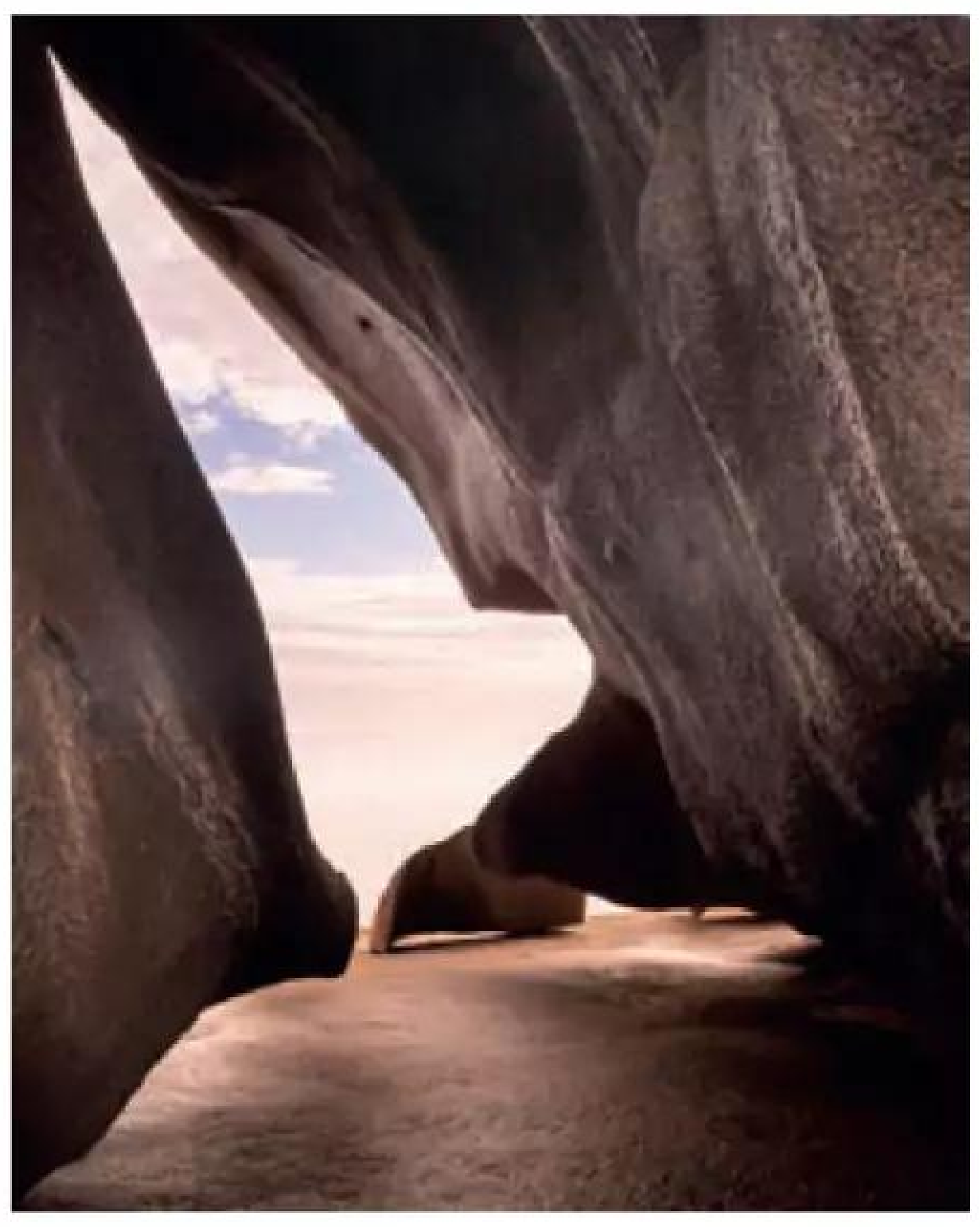


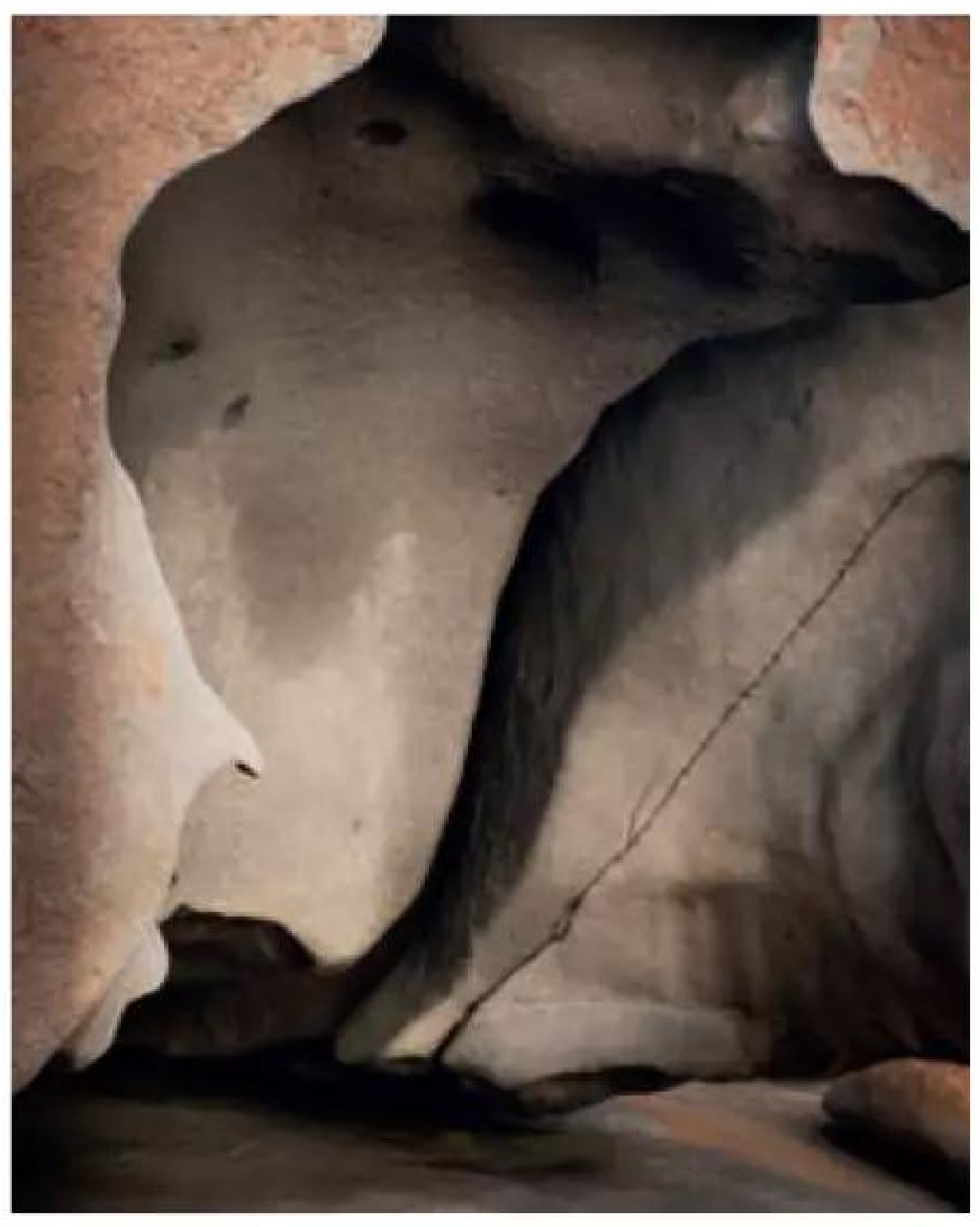
9. SUSAN ASTOR-SMITH

REMARKABLE ROCKS, KANGAROO ISLAND



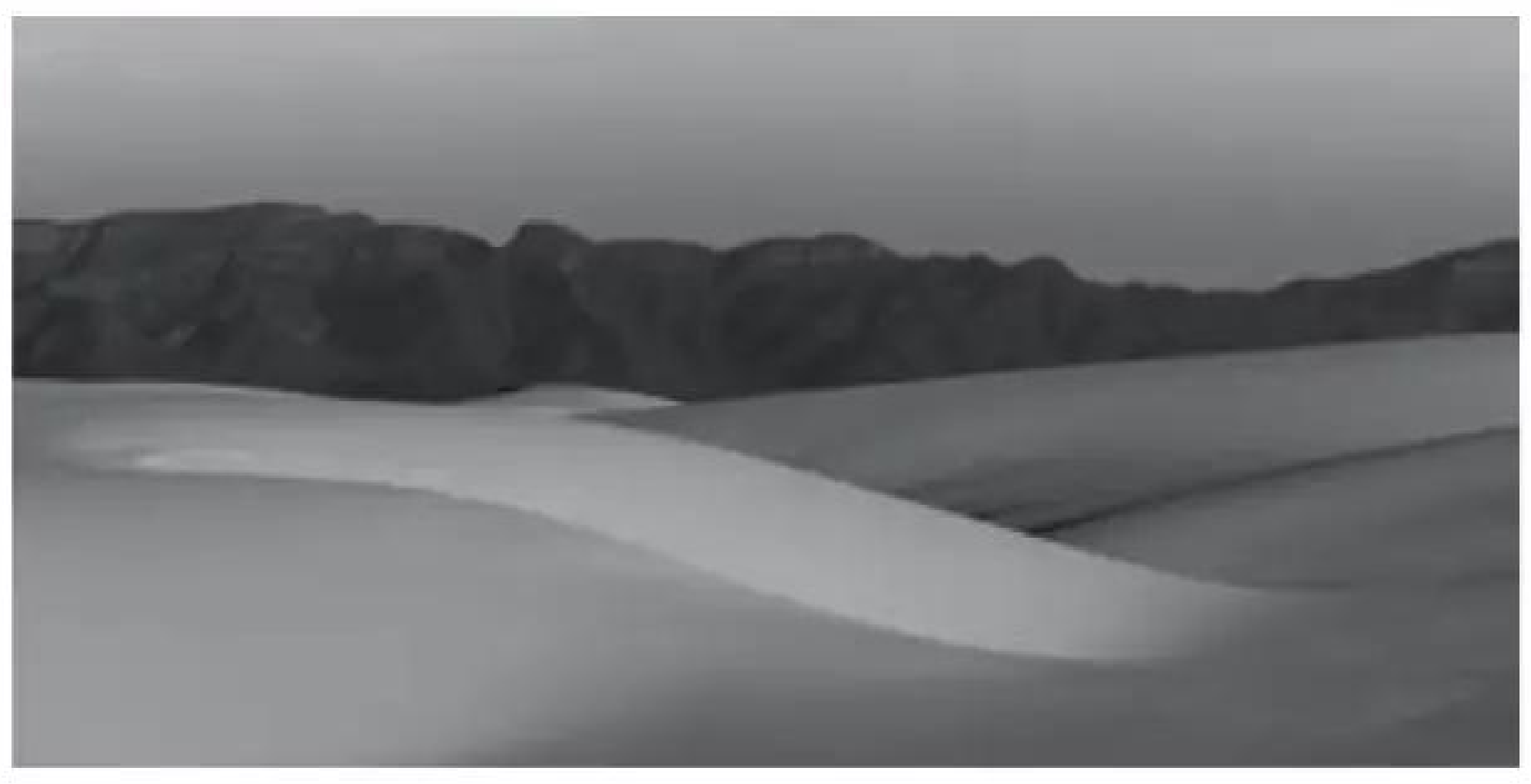


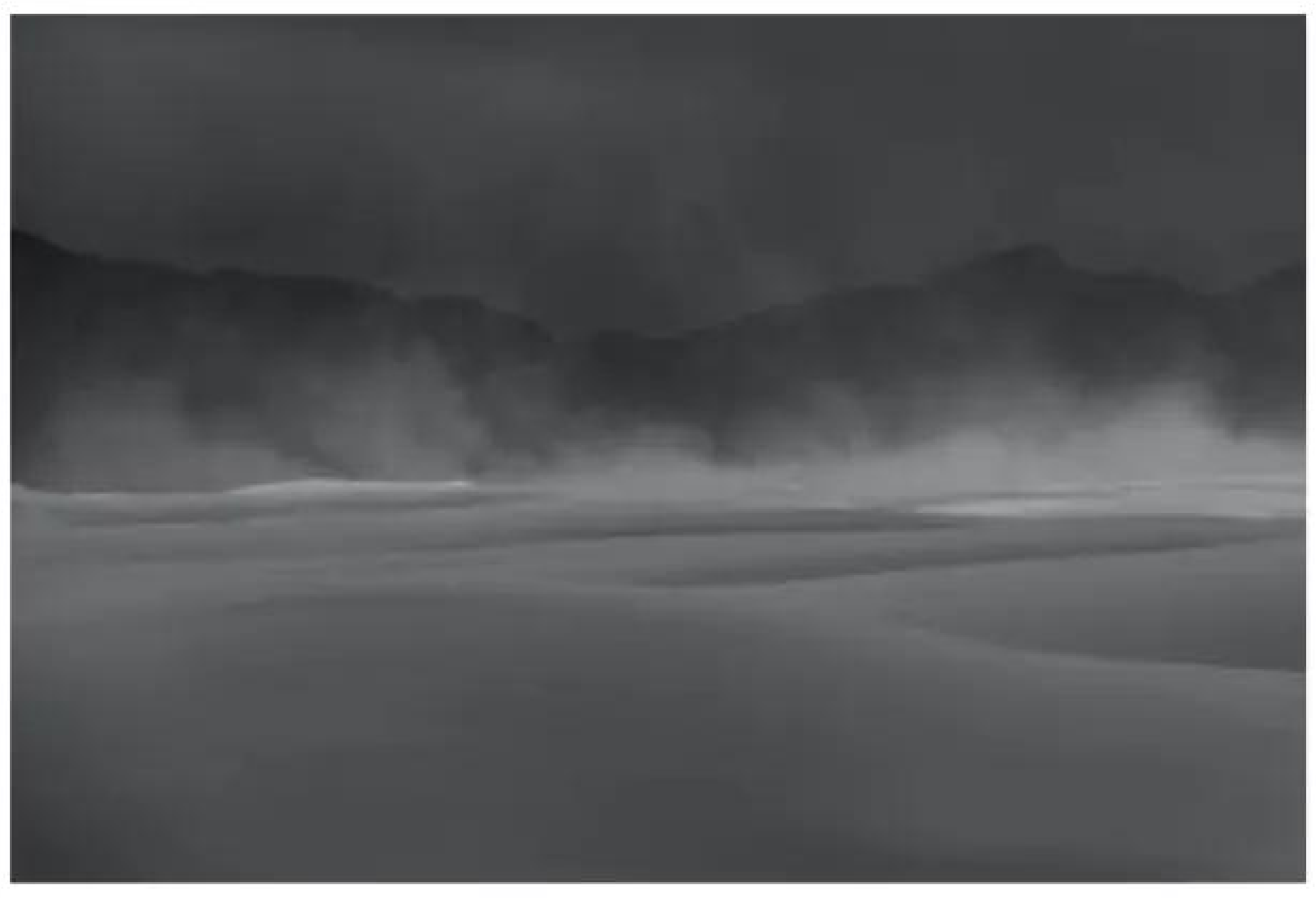


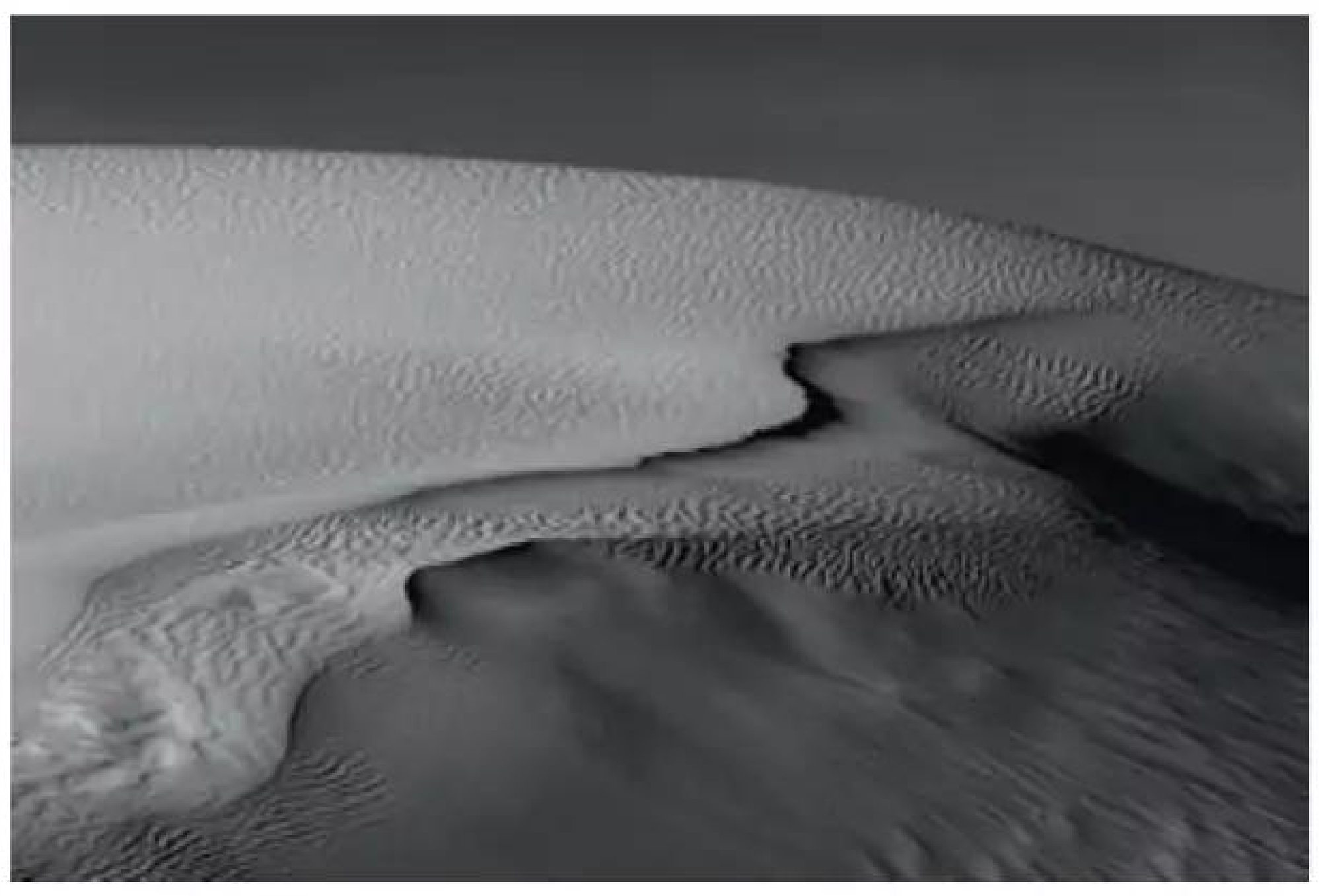


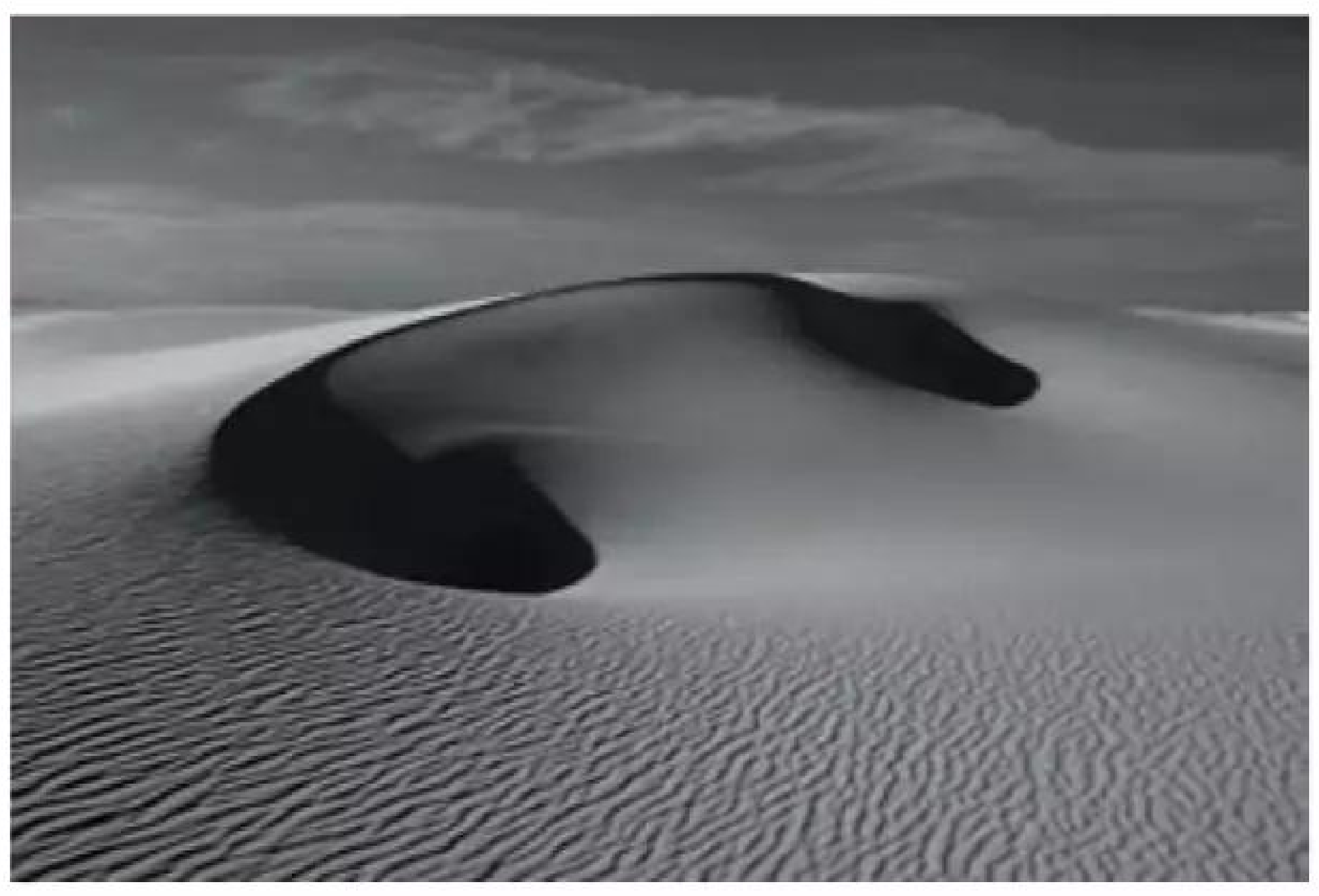
10. PAUL HOGAN

FIELDS OF GYPSUM



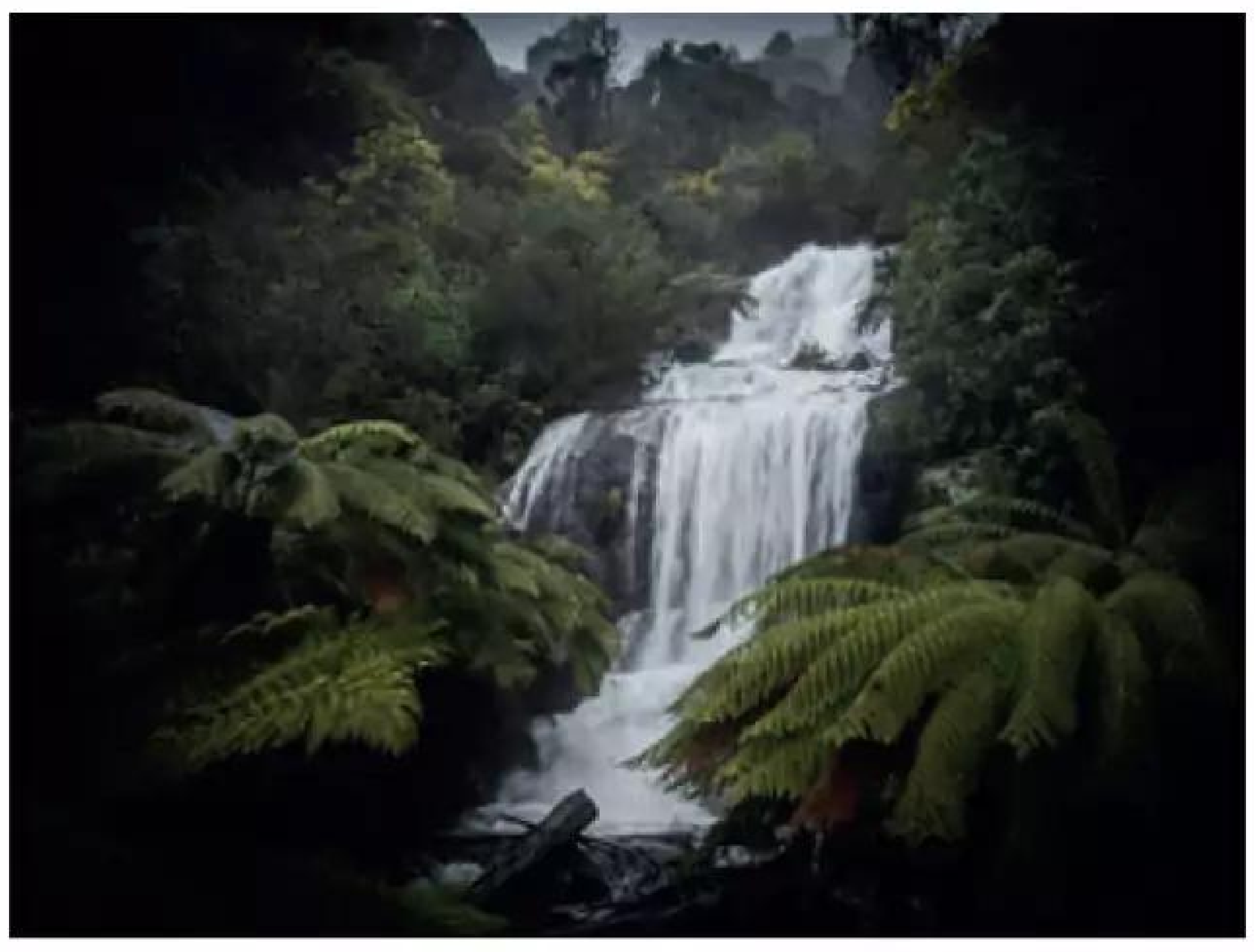


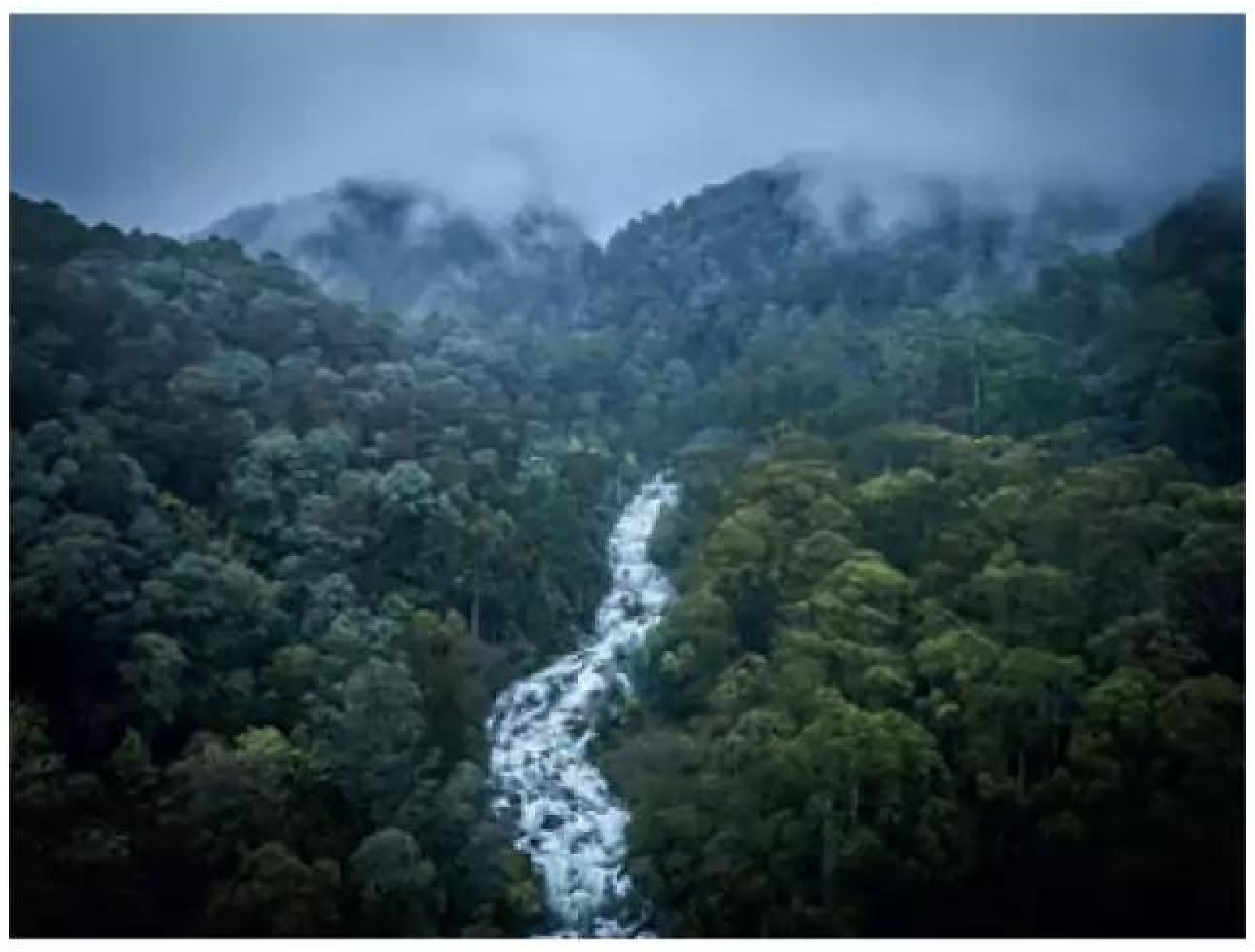


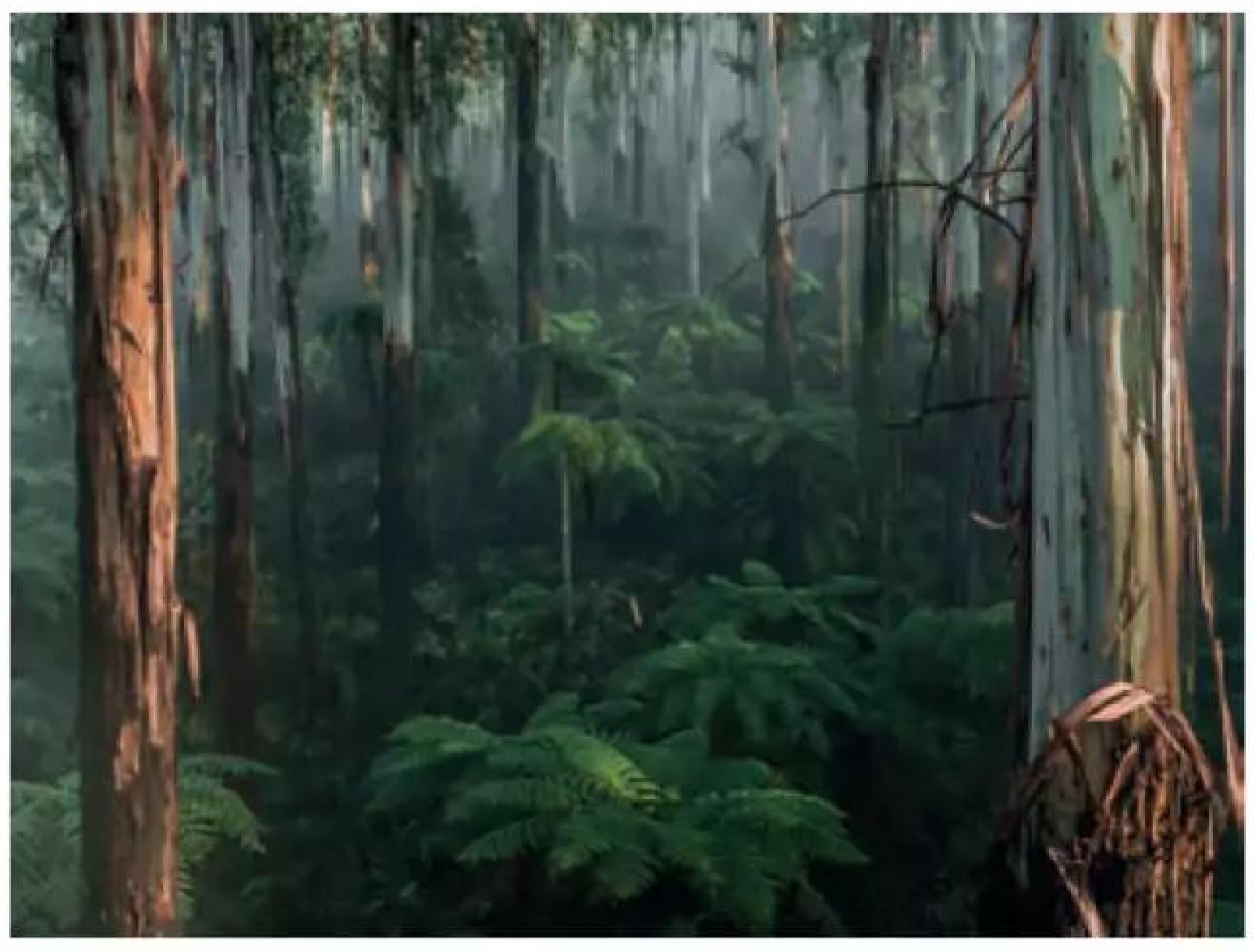


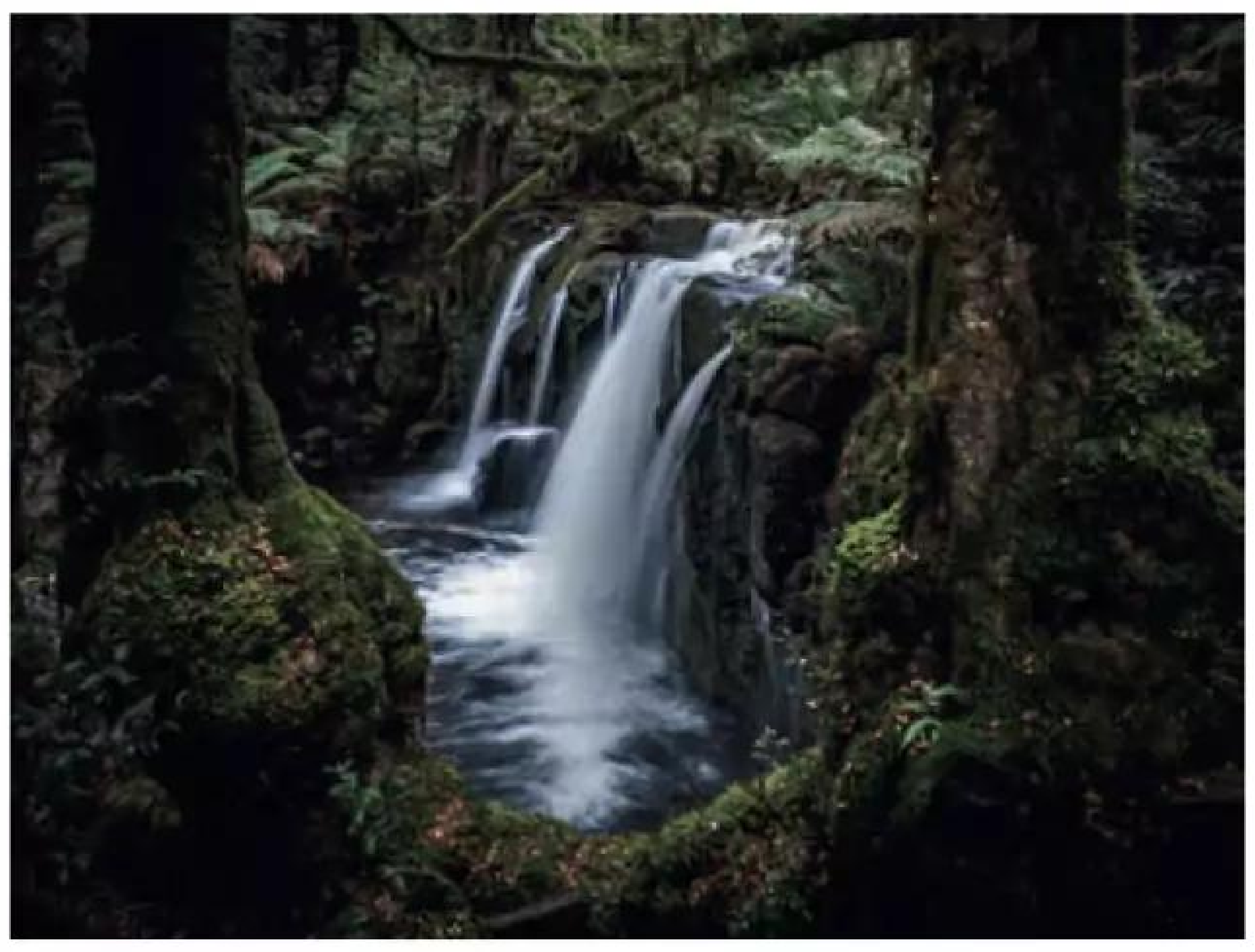
11. DAVID MUGGLETON

AUSTRALIAN ALPINE









12. RALPH MCCONAGHY

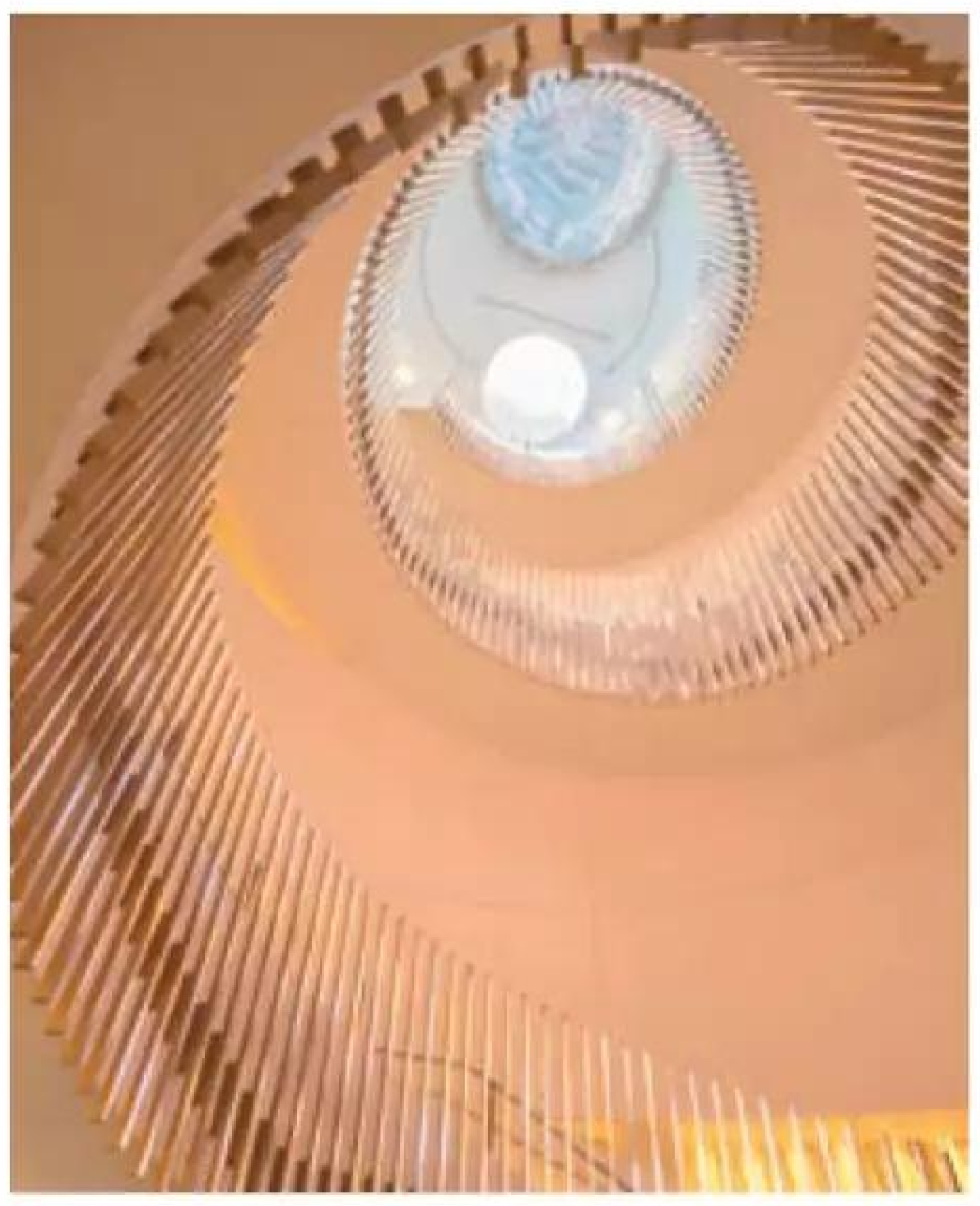
THE WEIGHT OF LIGHT

13. JJ RAO

SPECTRES OF THE NIGHT

14. KATHY WALLACE

SPIN ME AROUND

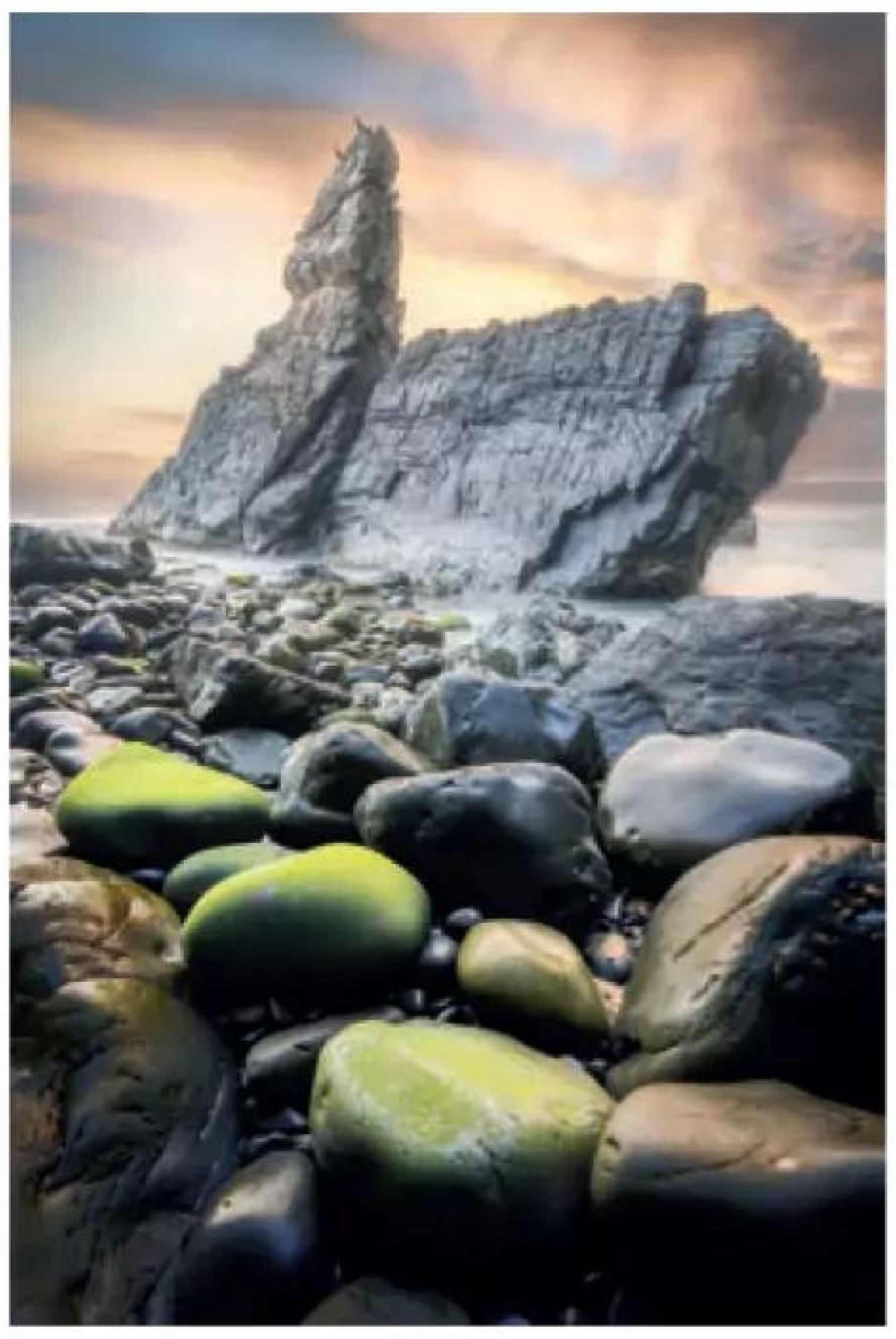


15. LINDA KY WEI

ICELAND VOLCANIC LANDFORM

16. SONJA BELLA

HOPE AND STRENGTH

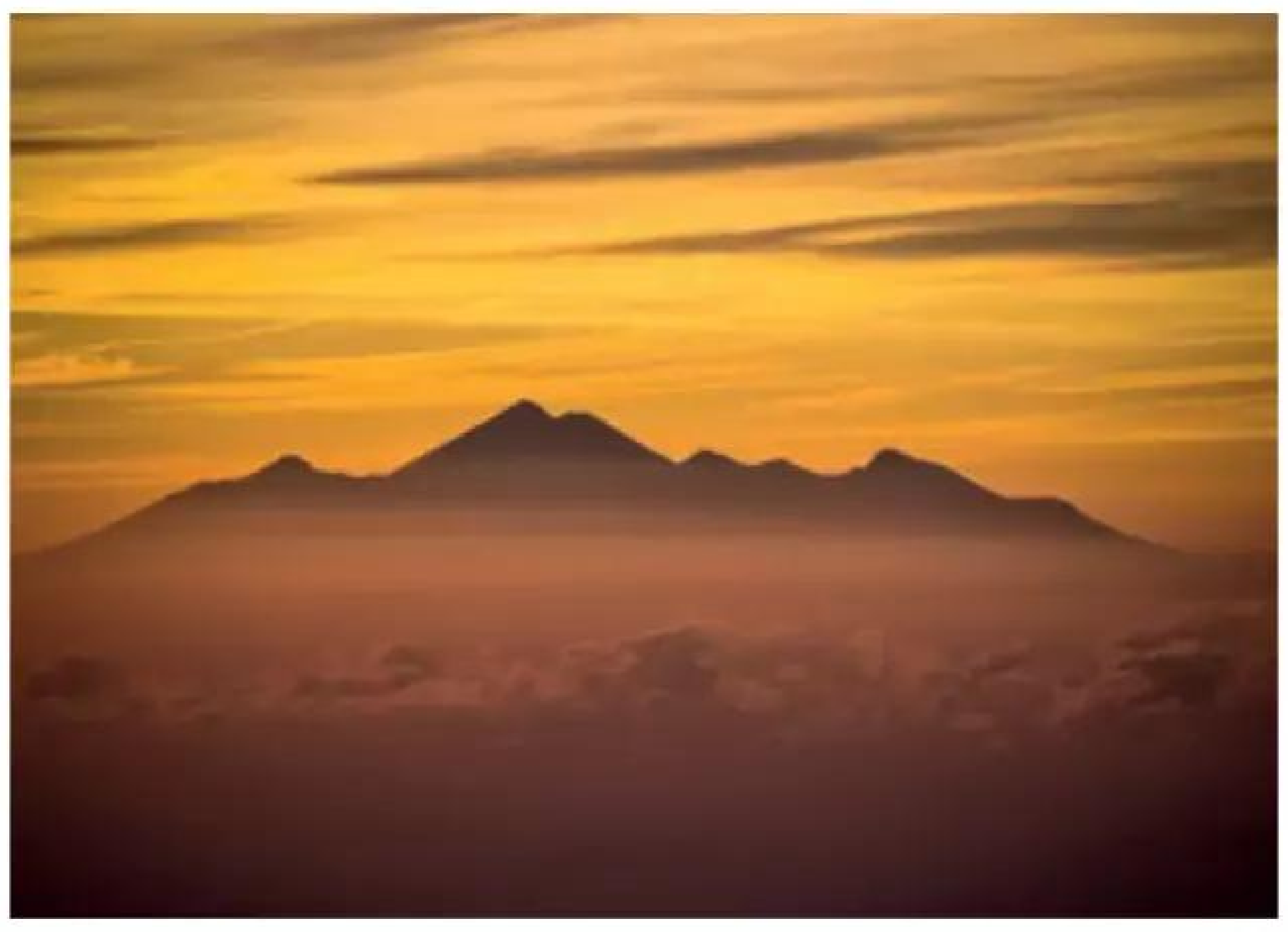


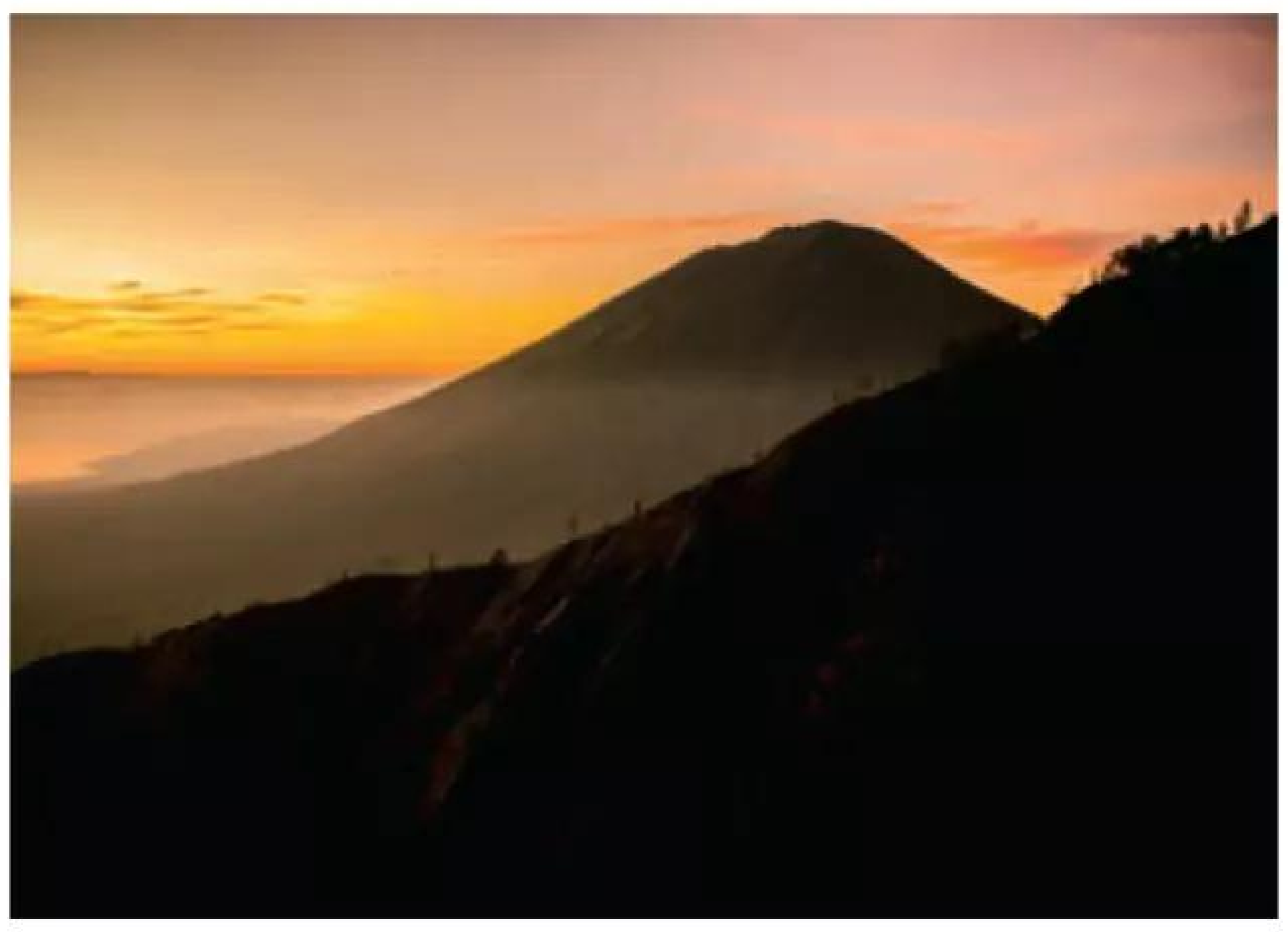
17. TYSON WALDRON

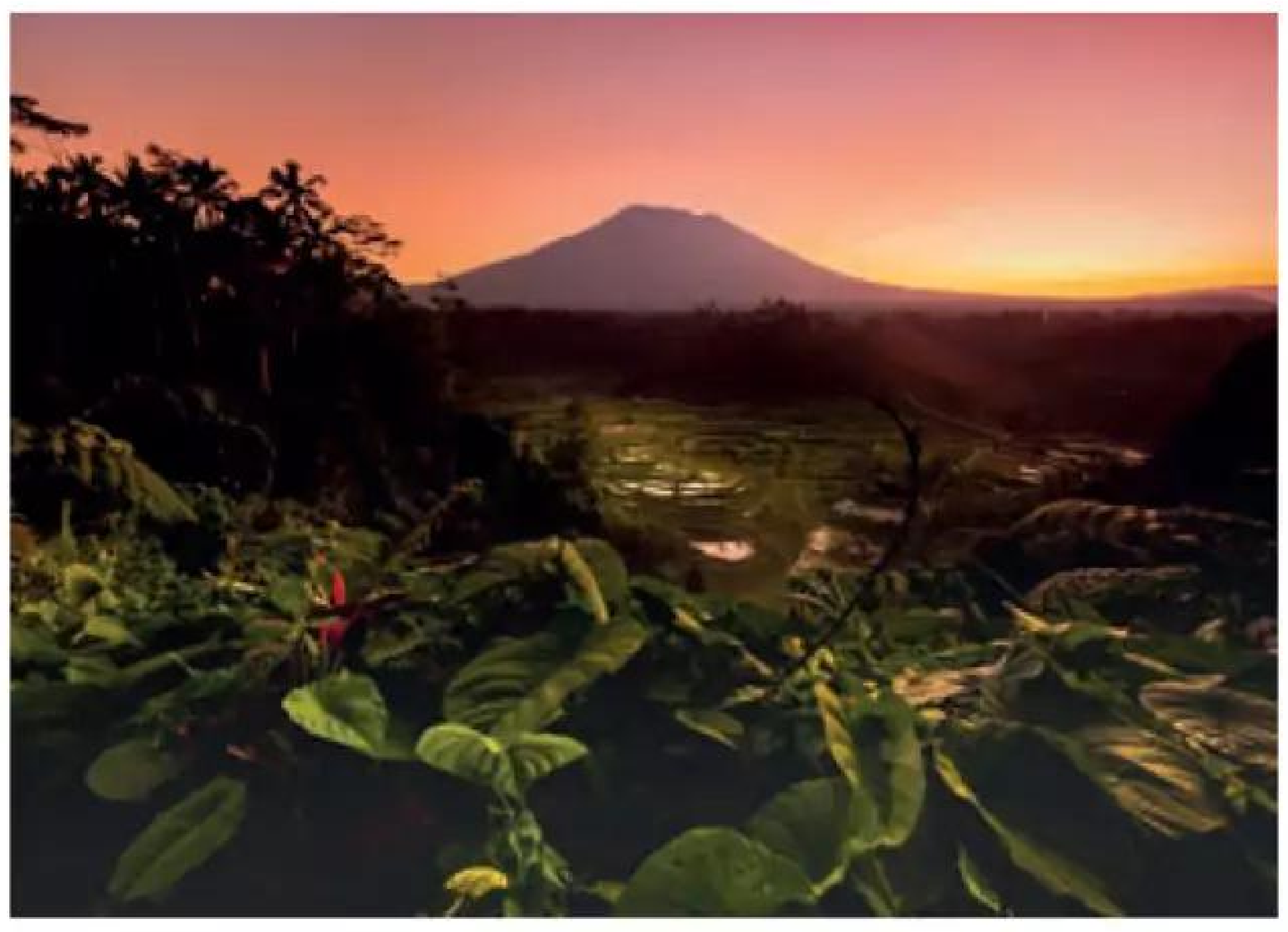
NATURAL AUSTRALIA

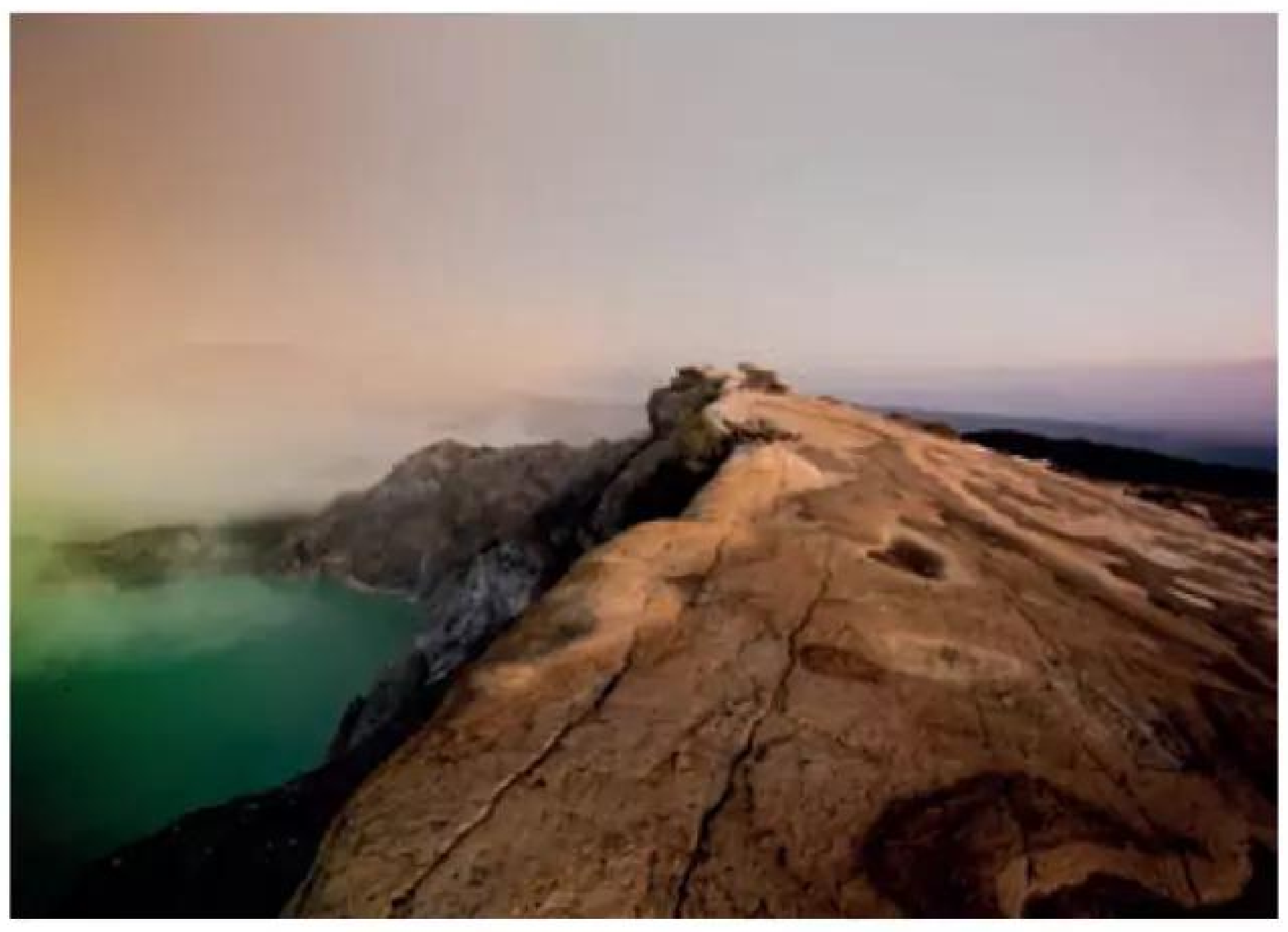
18. FRANSISCUS HERRY

MOUNTAIN PERSPECTIVE



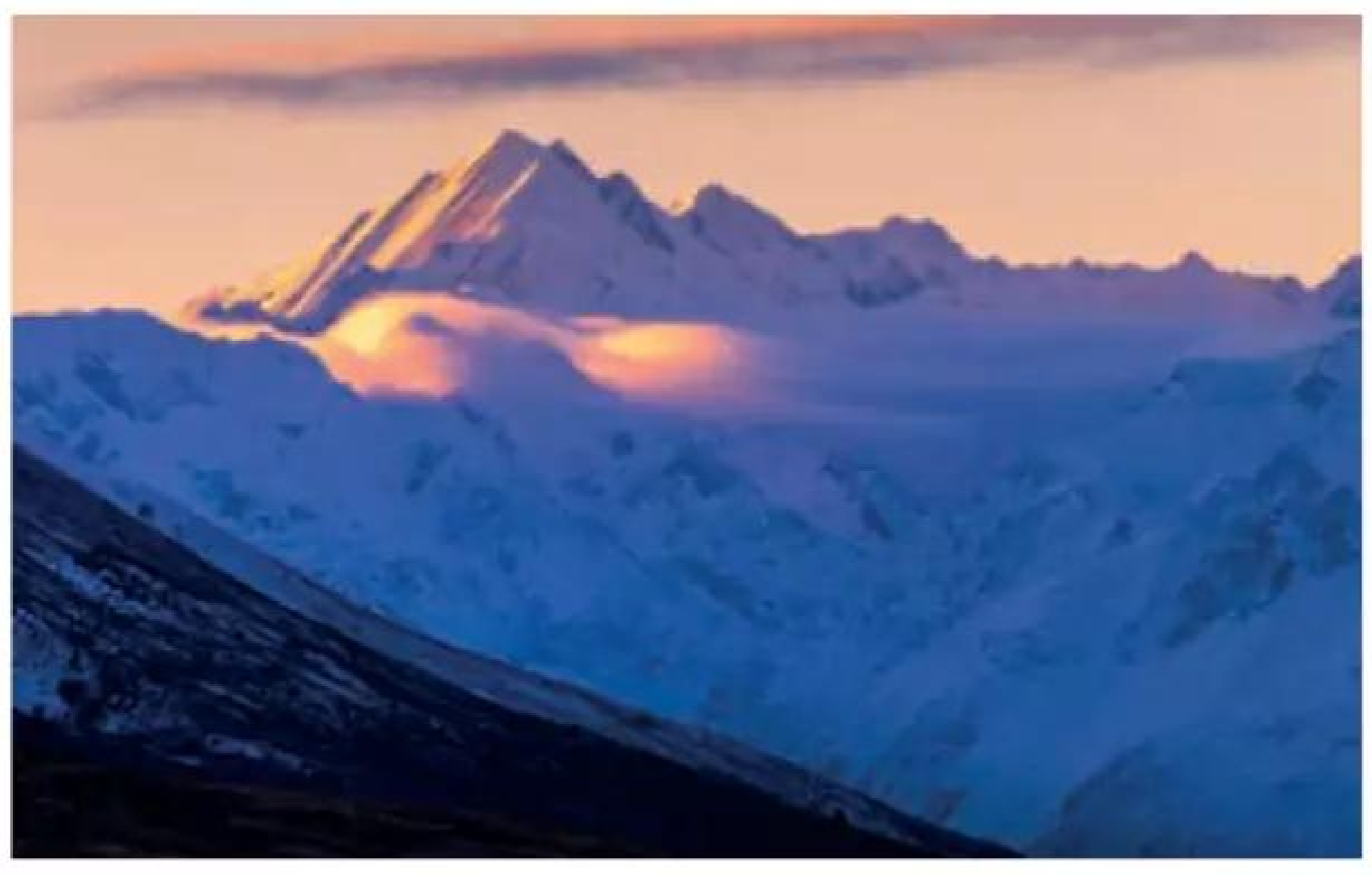


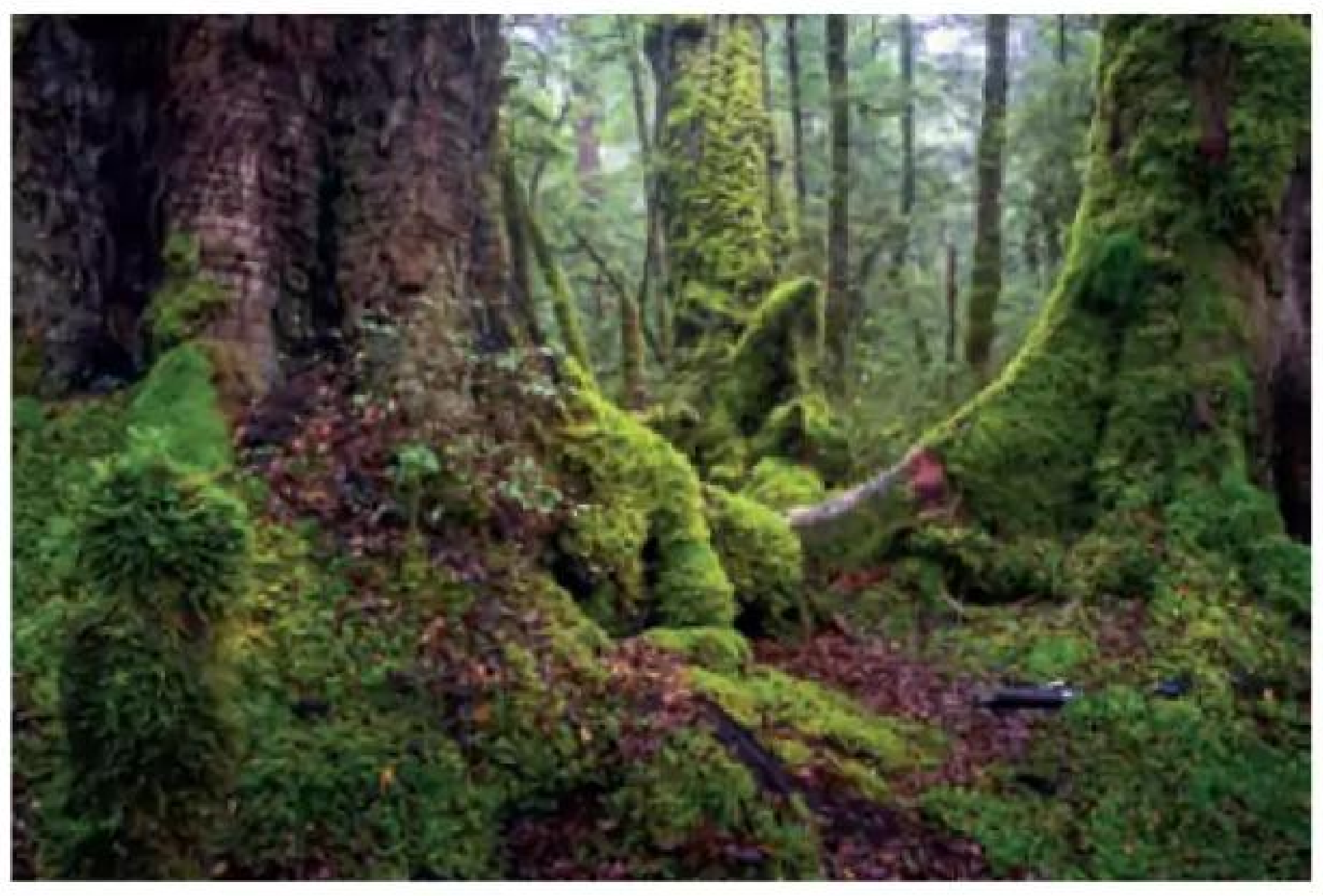


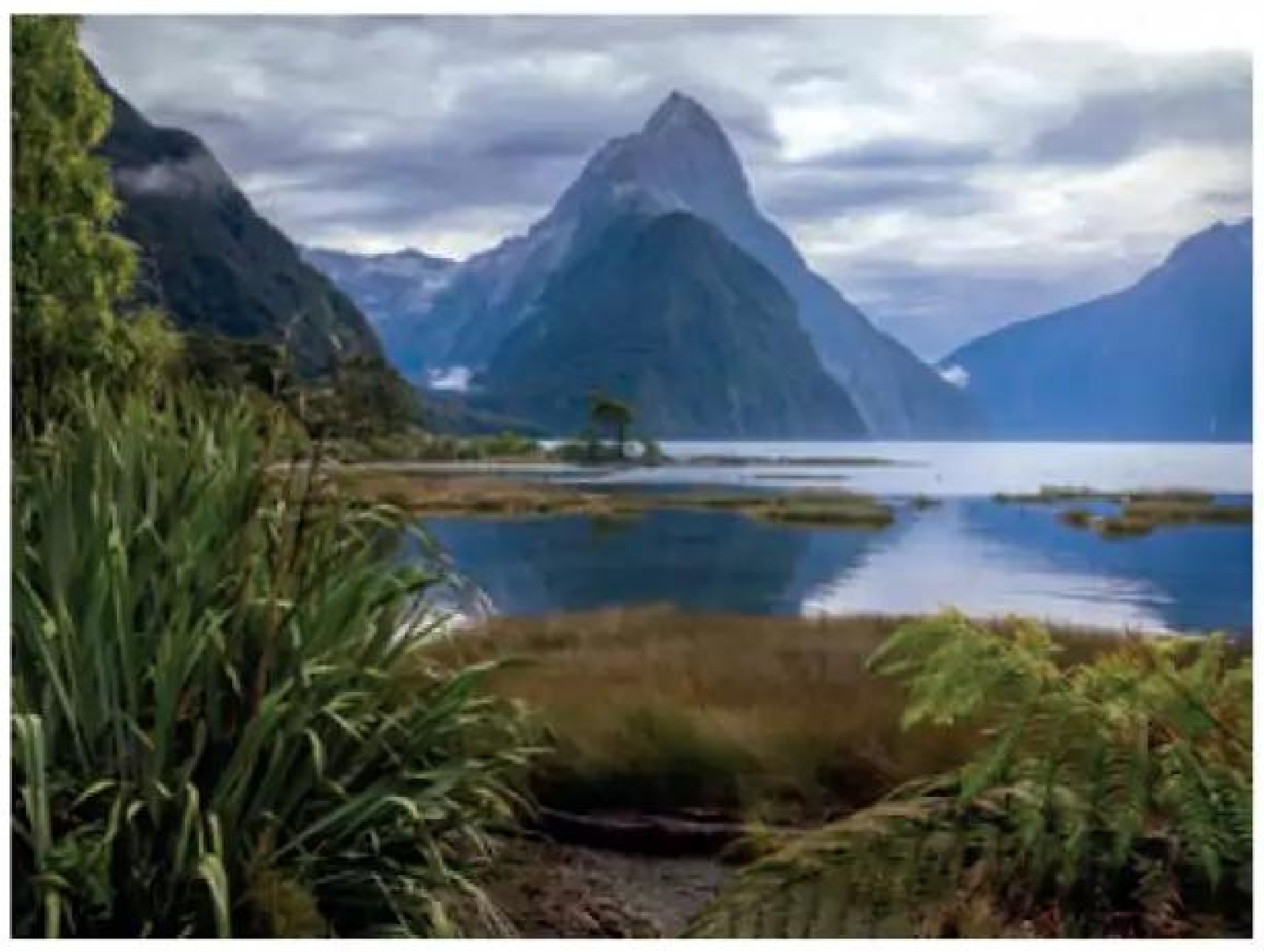


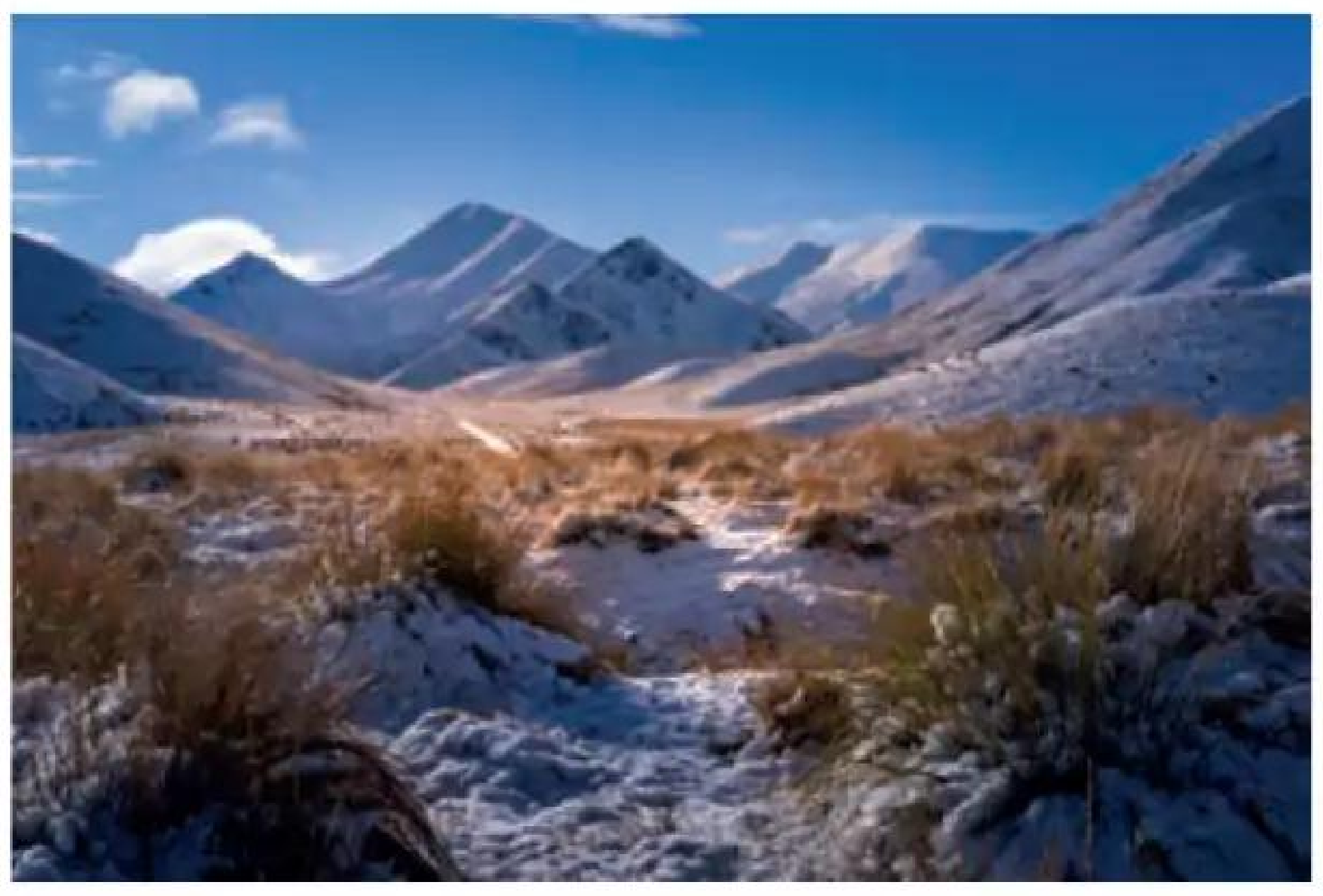
19. DAVID HUISMAN

MILFORD AND SURROUNDS, NZ



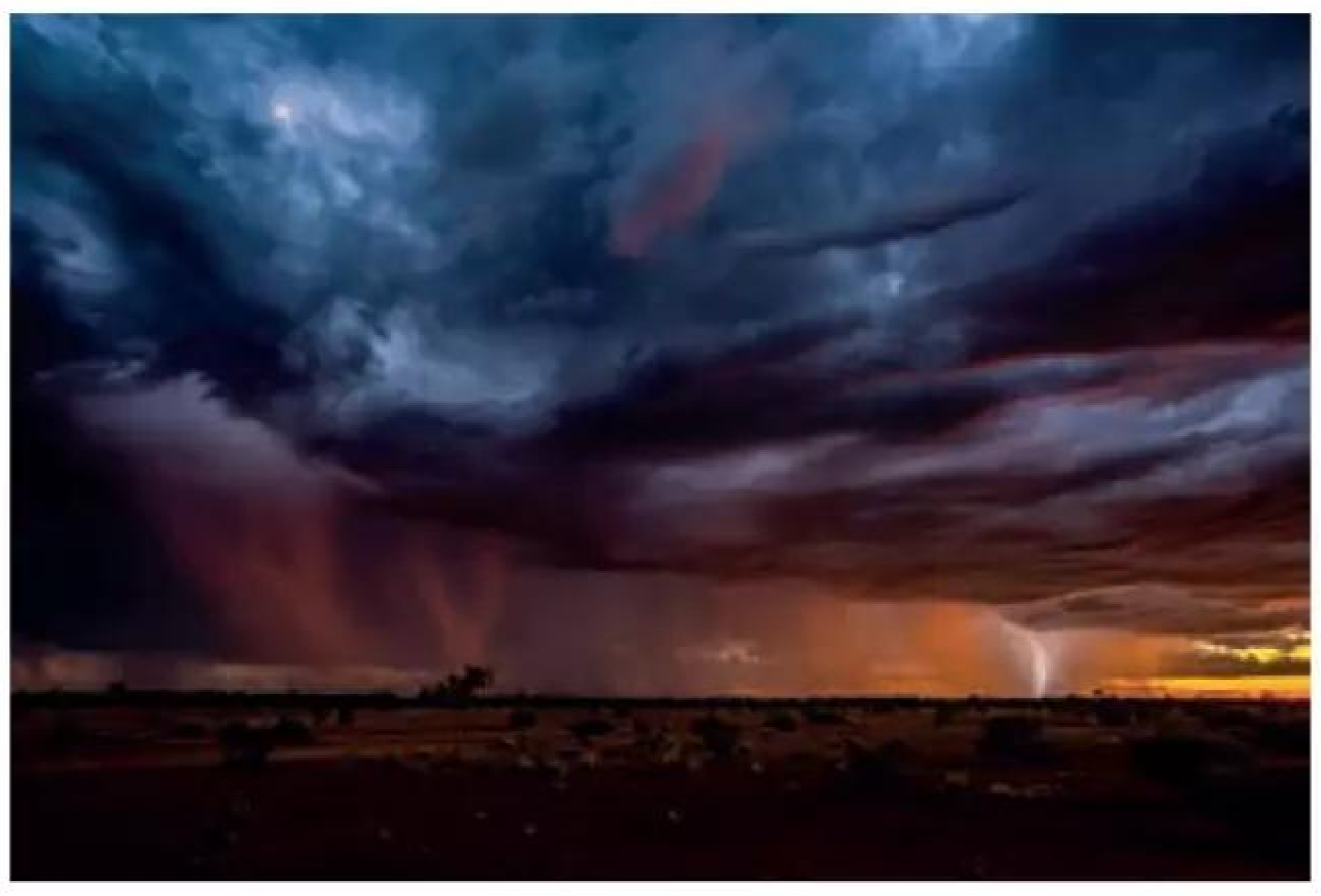


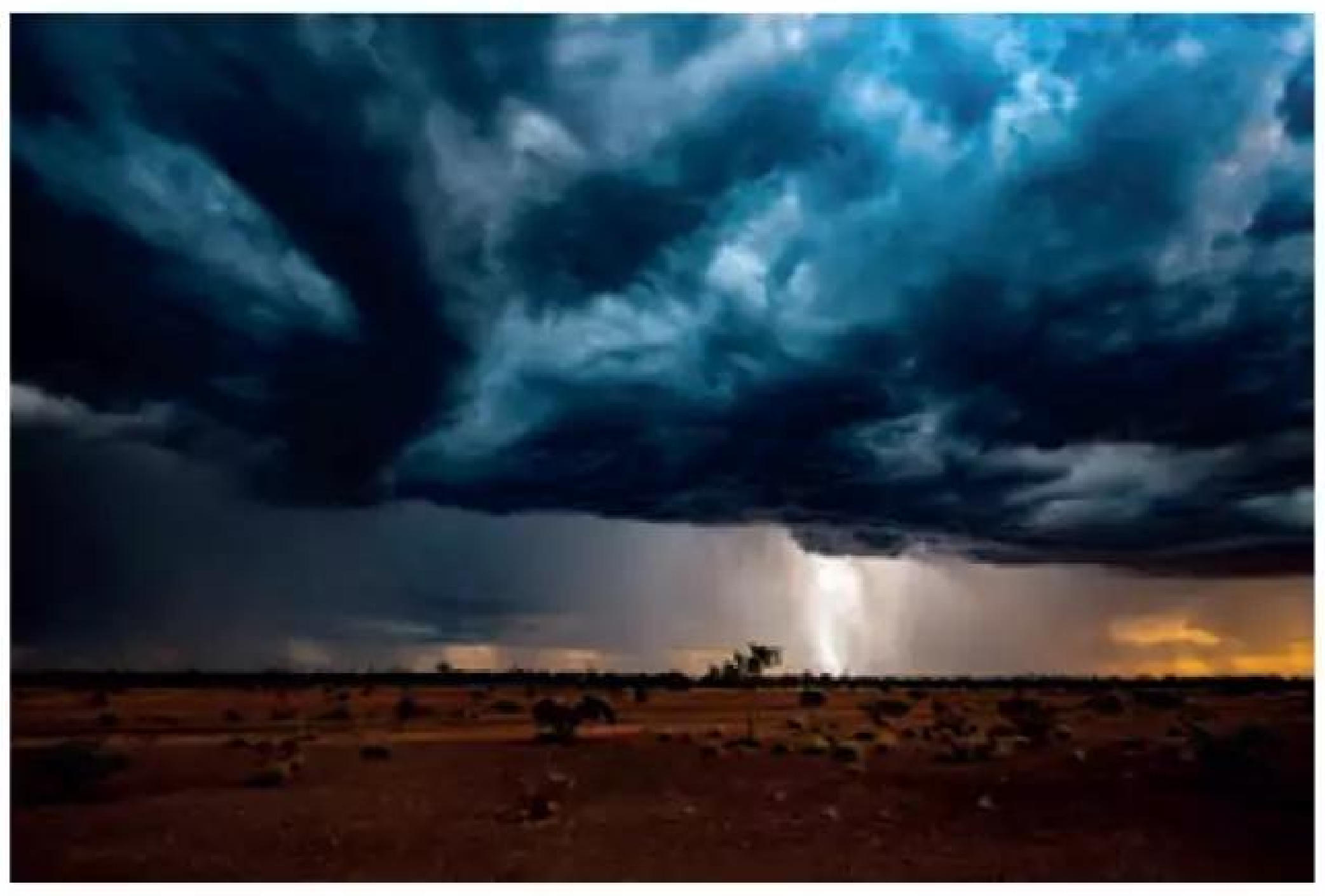


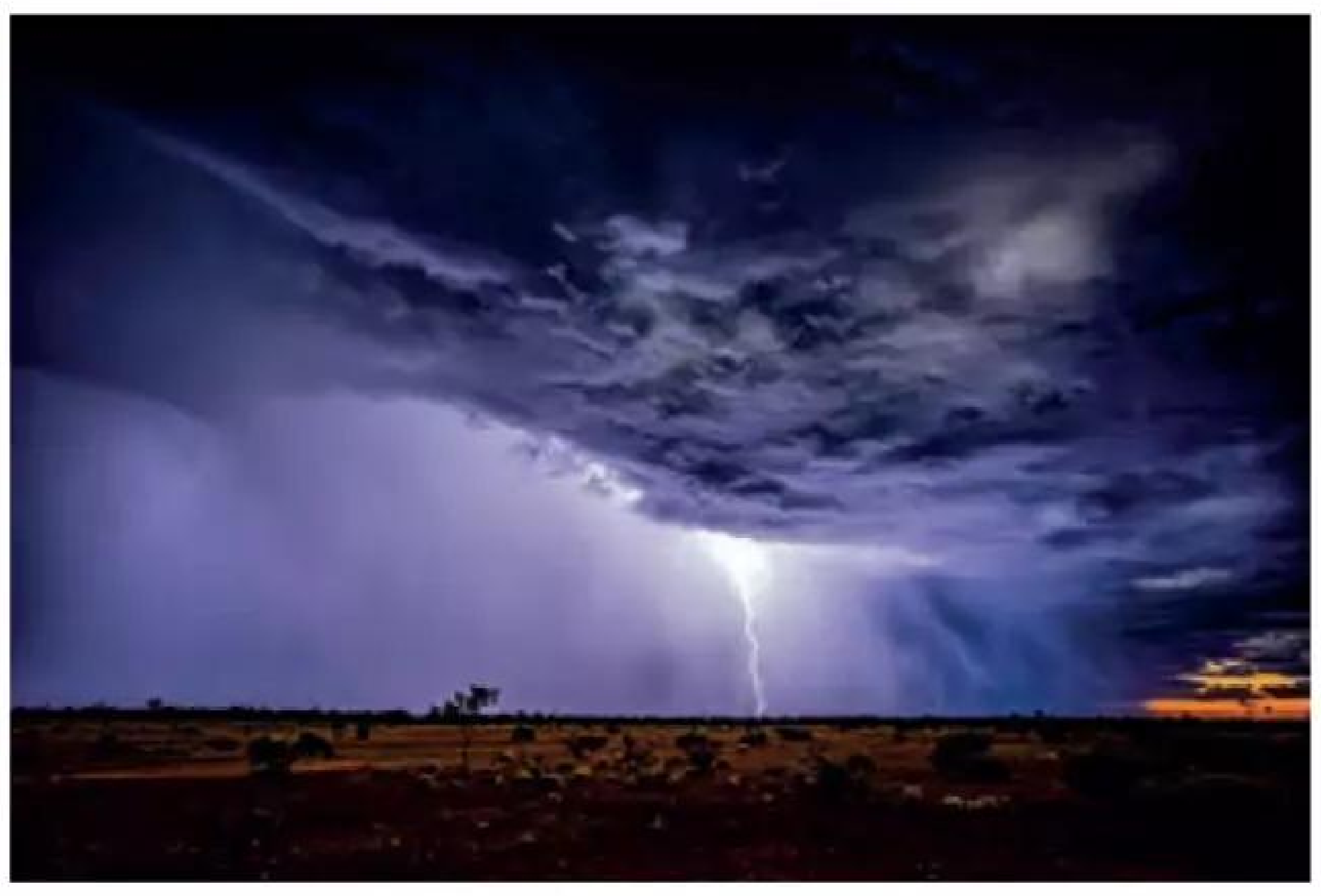


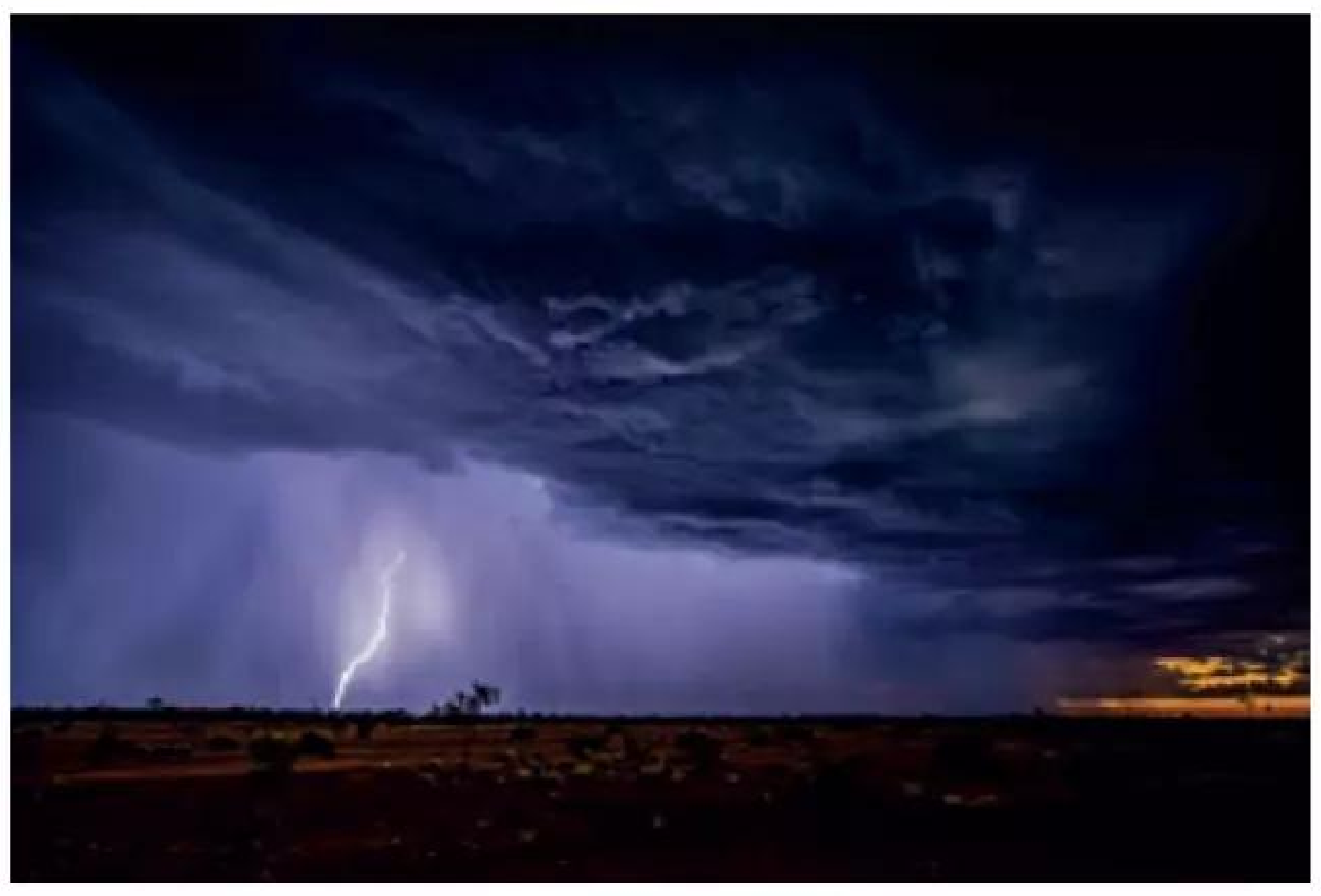
20. MATT WHITE

SCRAMMY GORGE, BLADENSBURG NATIONAL PARK, QUEENSLAND









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Maroochydore 50 Plaza Parade	Ph: 5479 2844

NSW

Chatswood Westfield	Ph: 9413 1144
Ted's World of Imaging 317 Pitt St Sydney	Ph: 9264 1687

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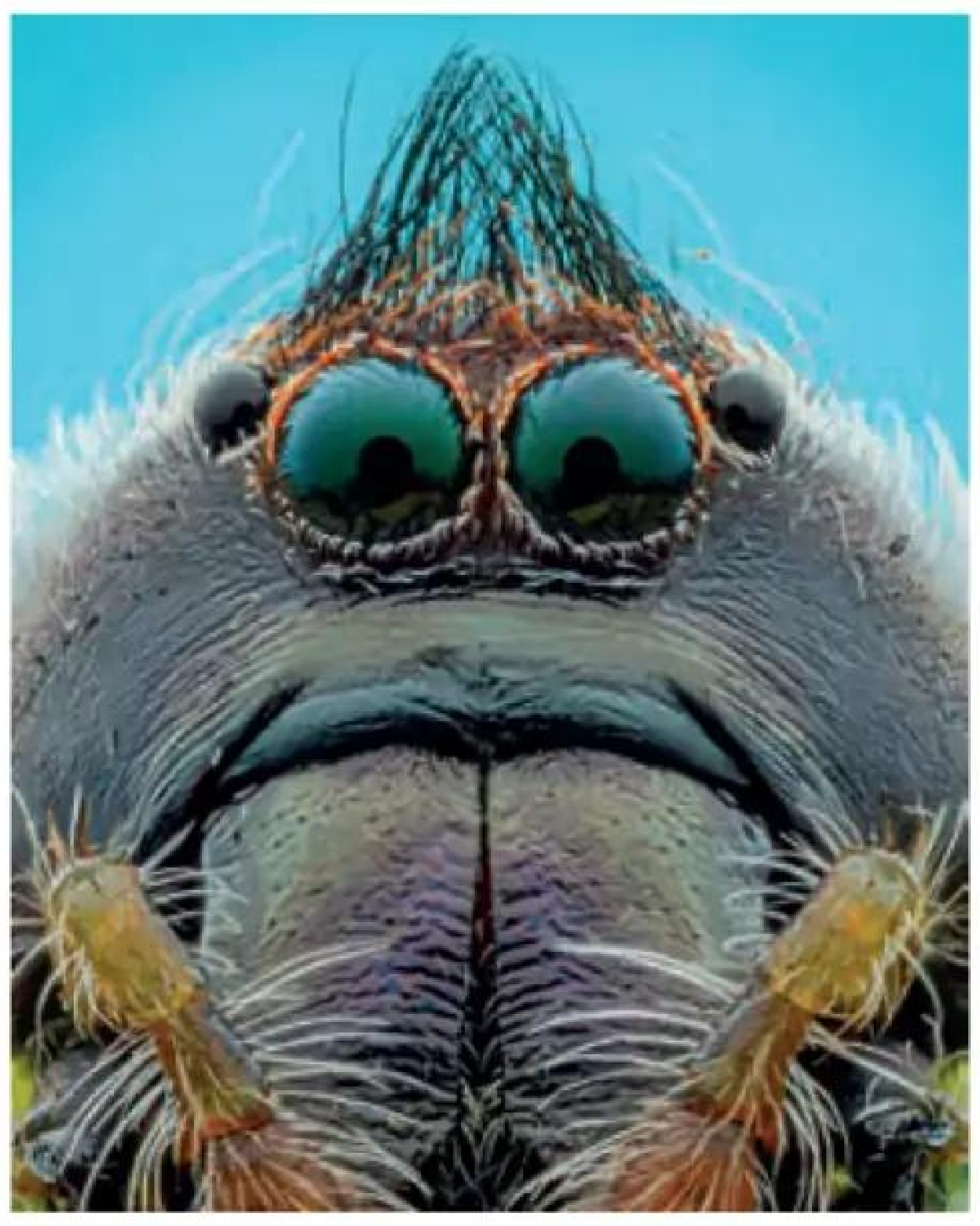
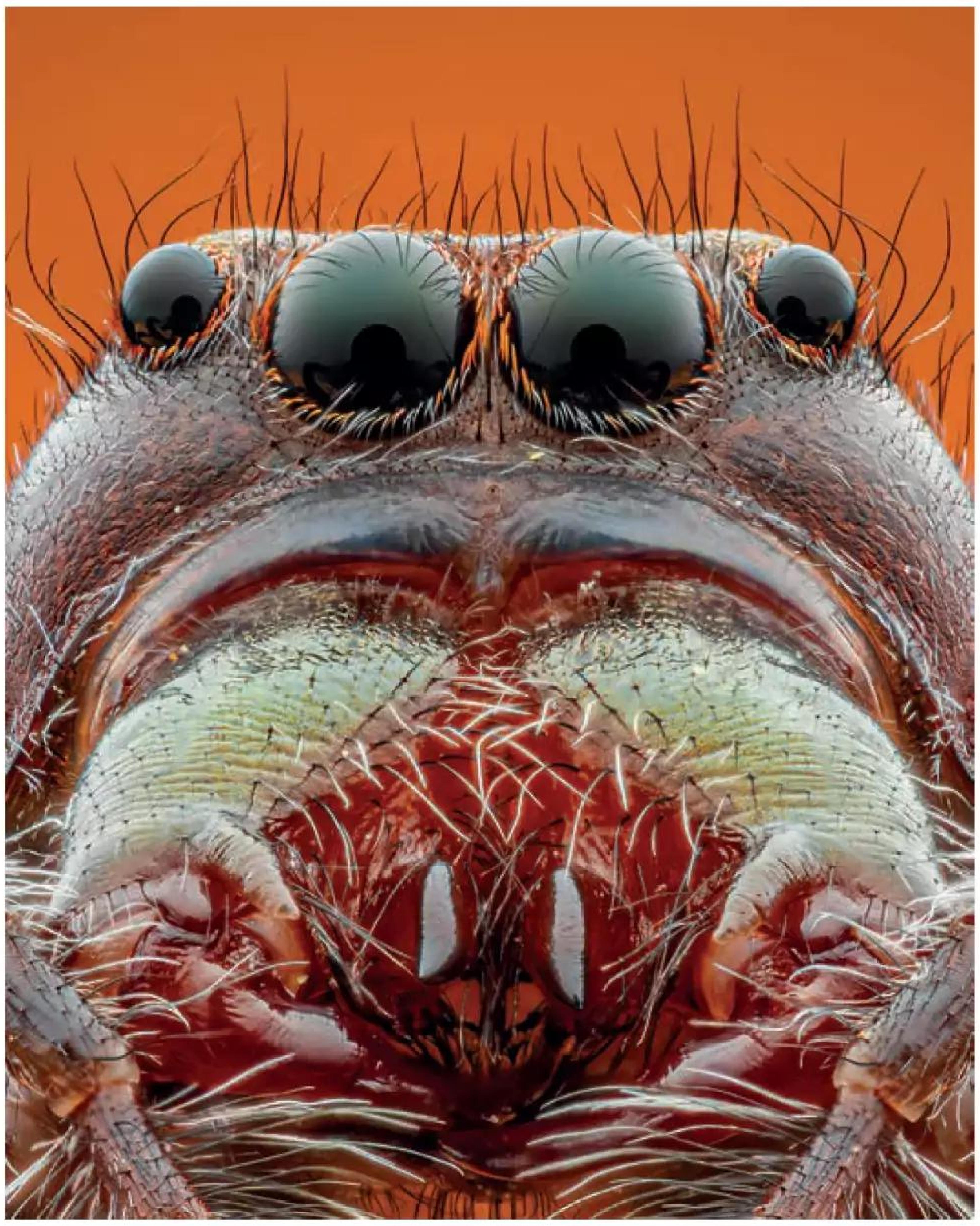
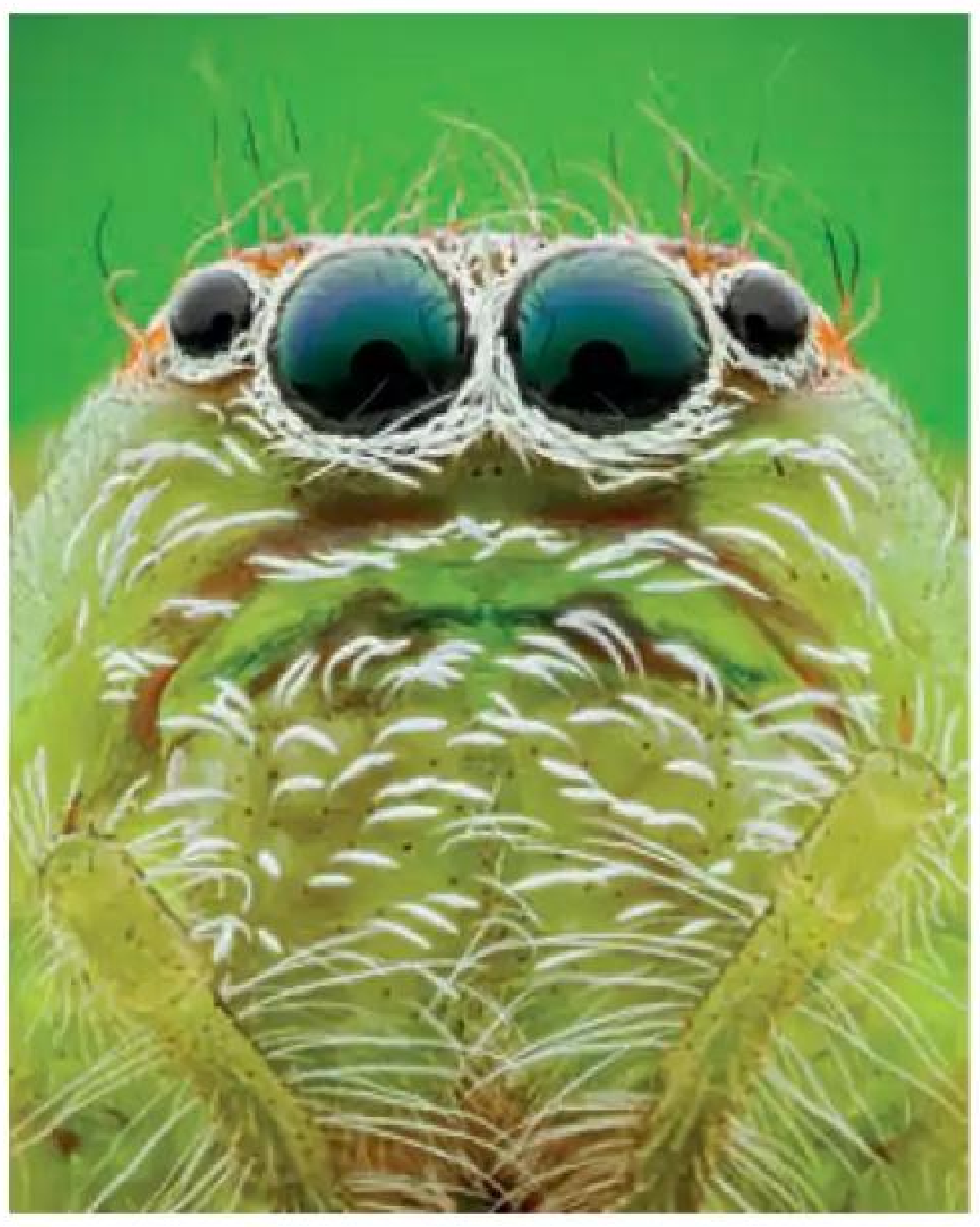
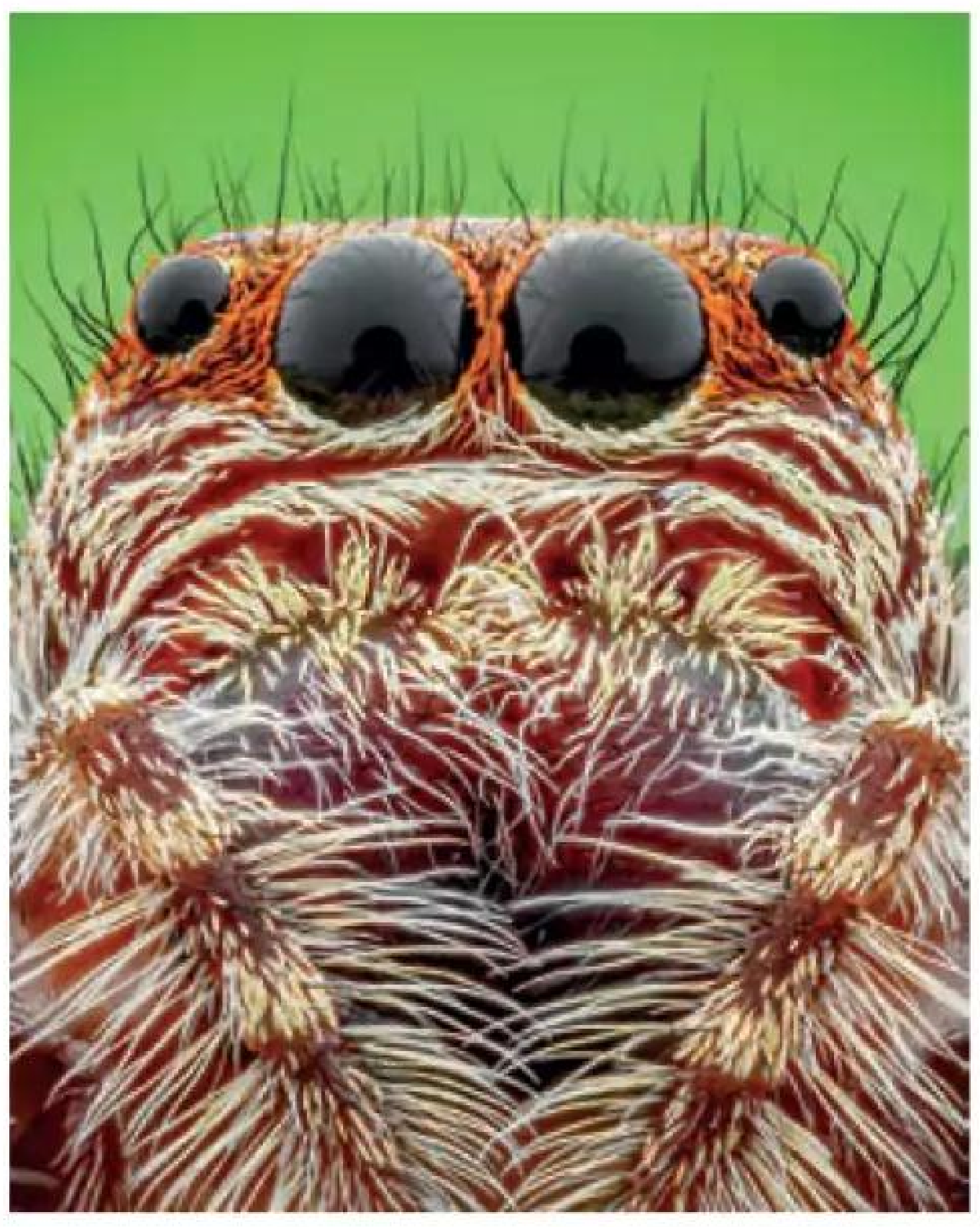
WINNER

ANIMALS & NATURE









JOHN PETERS

@johnpeters_photography

JUMPERS OF AUS

REMARKABLY, John Peters tells us he only began macro photography in January, and since then, his interest and knowledge in spiders has greatly grown.

"They are so much more than just 'a body with legs', but instead they each have their own unique characteristics which give them personality," he says.

"When I show people my images, almost always they ask me, 'what's the trick to keeping them so still?' The reality is there is no trick at all, as the greatest challenge I have faced is patience, as jumping spiders do not stay still!"

Peters says he'll often spend hours with a single jumper to get the shot he is looking for.

"After 500–1000 shots I should have one good stack, but even this is no guarantee."

For his category-winning series *Jumpers of Aus*, he combined backgrounds taken with Bunnings paint sample cards and his signature front-on symmetrical style, which he describes as the most difficult shot type to achieve, to capture a consistent series that wowed our judges with its technical expertise.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

ANTHONY MCKEE: If Schwarzkopf made hair products for spiders, this could be their ad campaign! John Peters' portraits of Australian native jumping spiders (photographed against paint swatches) are fun and engaging but they are also exceptionally clever, with each photograph being focus stacked from dozens of captures. While most of us run from spiders, John's photos have given each of these tiny spiders a personality, and in the process he has revealed how individual and unique each of these tiny spiders can be. Congratulations, and here's hoping our readers remember these portraits the next time they go to squish a spider.

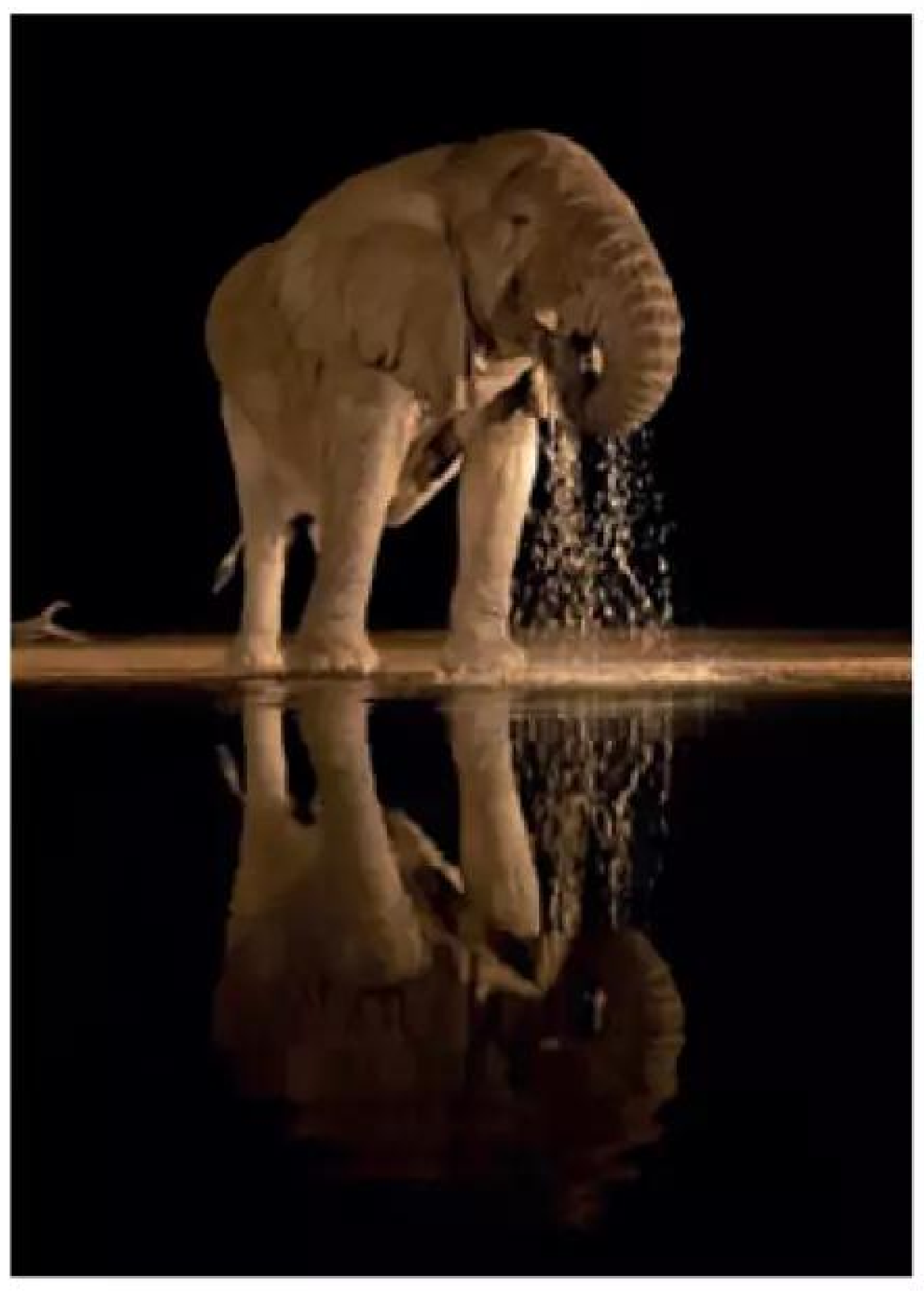
DOUG GIMESY: This series is not only technically difficult to capture, as photographing a moving animal with consistent composition is no small feat, but the use of different coloured backgrounds gives each image its own character while still tying them together as a cohesive whole.

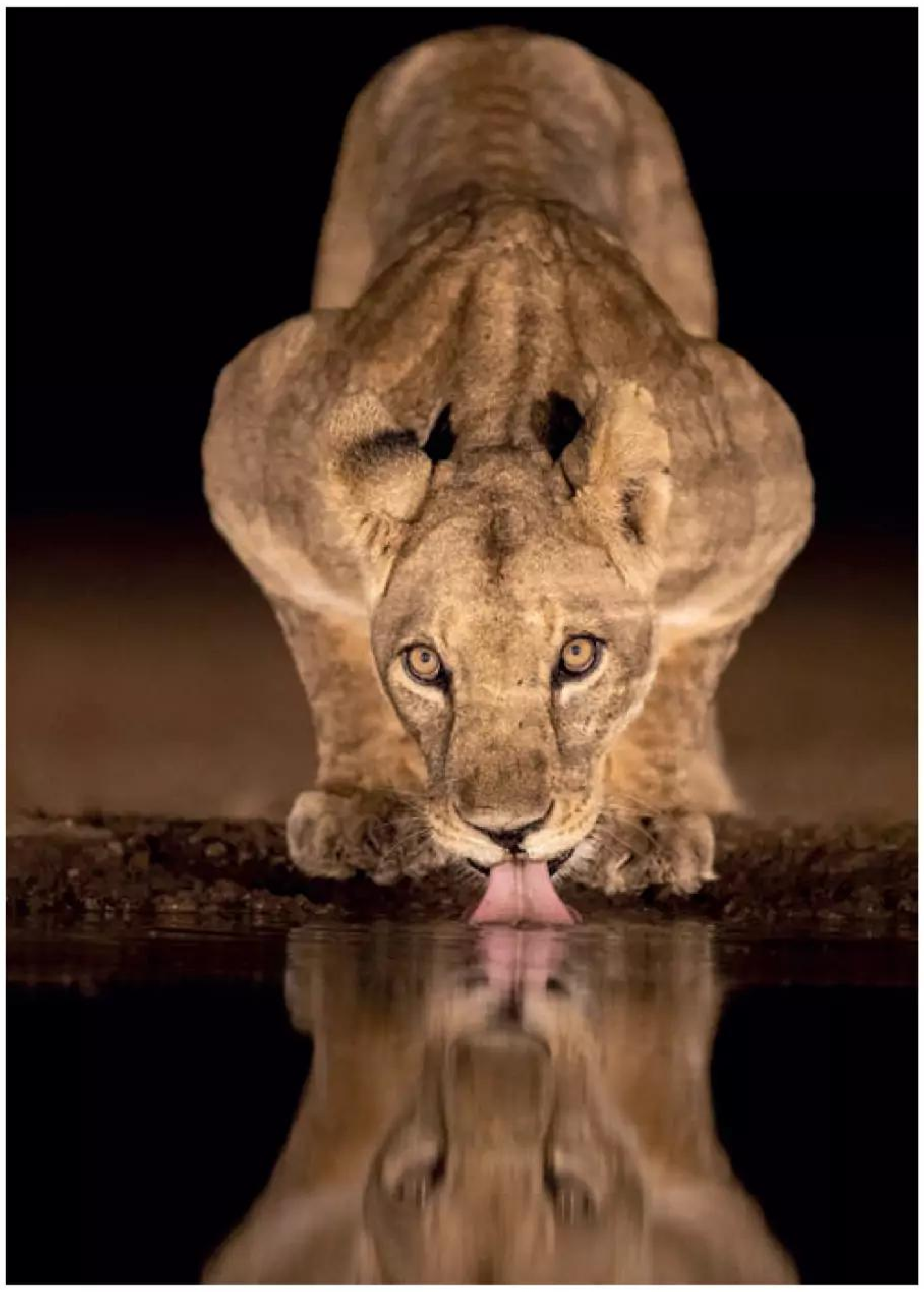
STEVE AND ANN TOON: How marvellous to see these jumping spiders up close like this! And what characters this tight, highly detailed and super-impactful portfolio also reveal to us. These are skillful shots we could almost imagine hanging in some ancestral portrait gallery by the old masters. We use the term 'masters' deliberately because John's work is a masterclass in precision. Technical wizardry combined with painstaking craft and passion like this – because creating these shots is certainly a labour of love – deserves our full admiration. But then to manage to make us see ourselves in this hidden world we often neglect to notice or respect – now that's something really special.

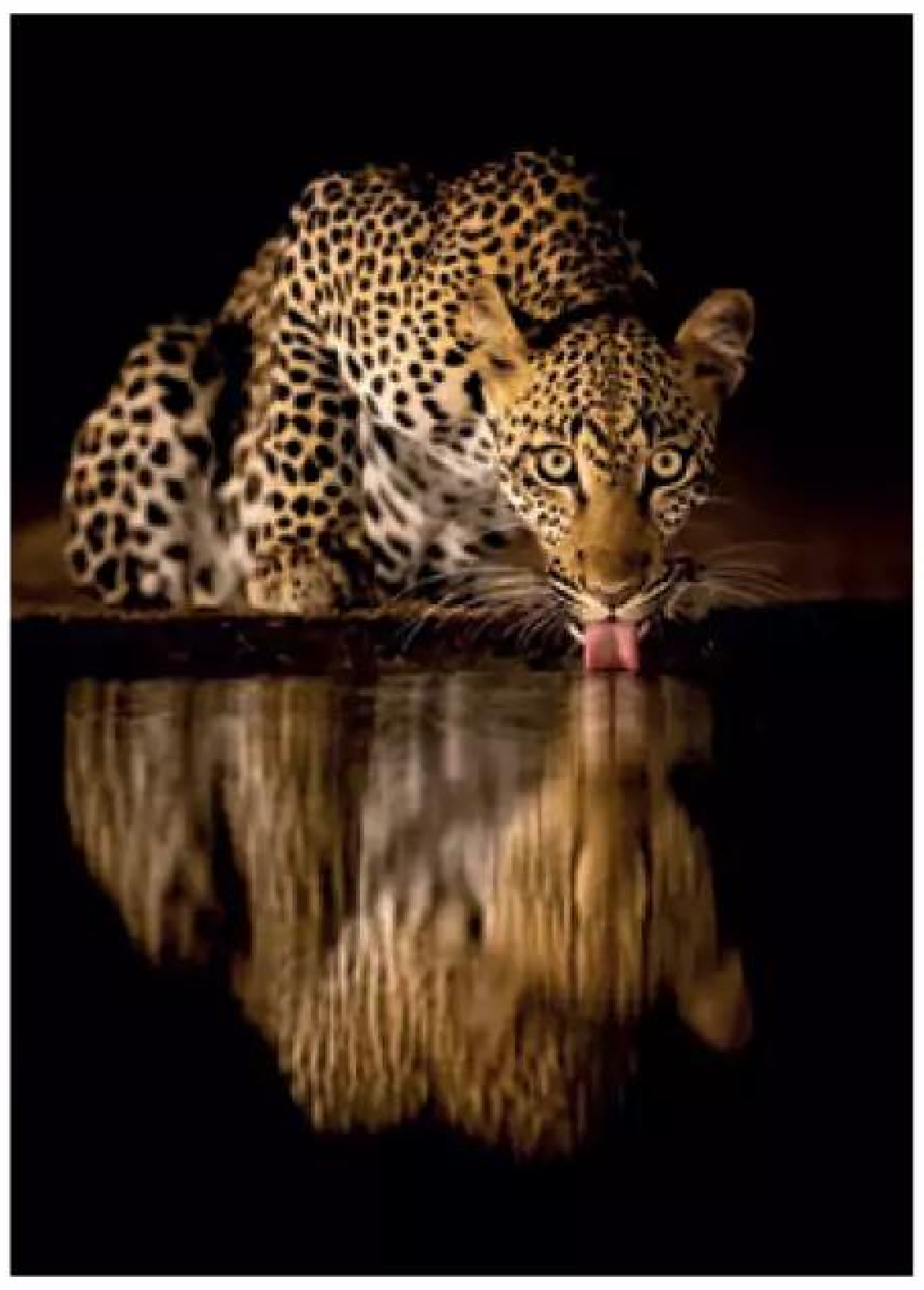
PRIZE: $1,000 cash, a Billingham Hadley Small Pro Camera Bag valued at $515, and a Photobookshop HD layflat photobook valued at $289. Plus, three Retouch4Me photo retouching apps.

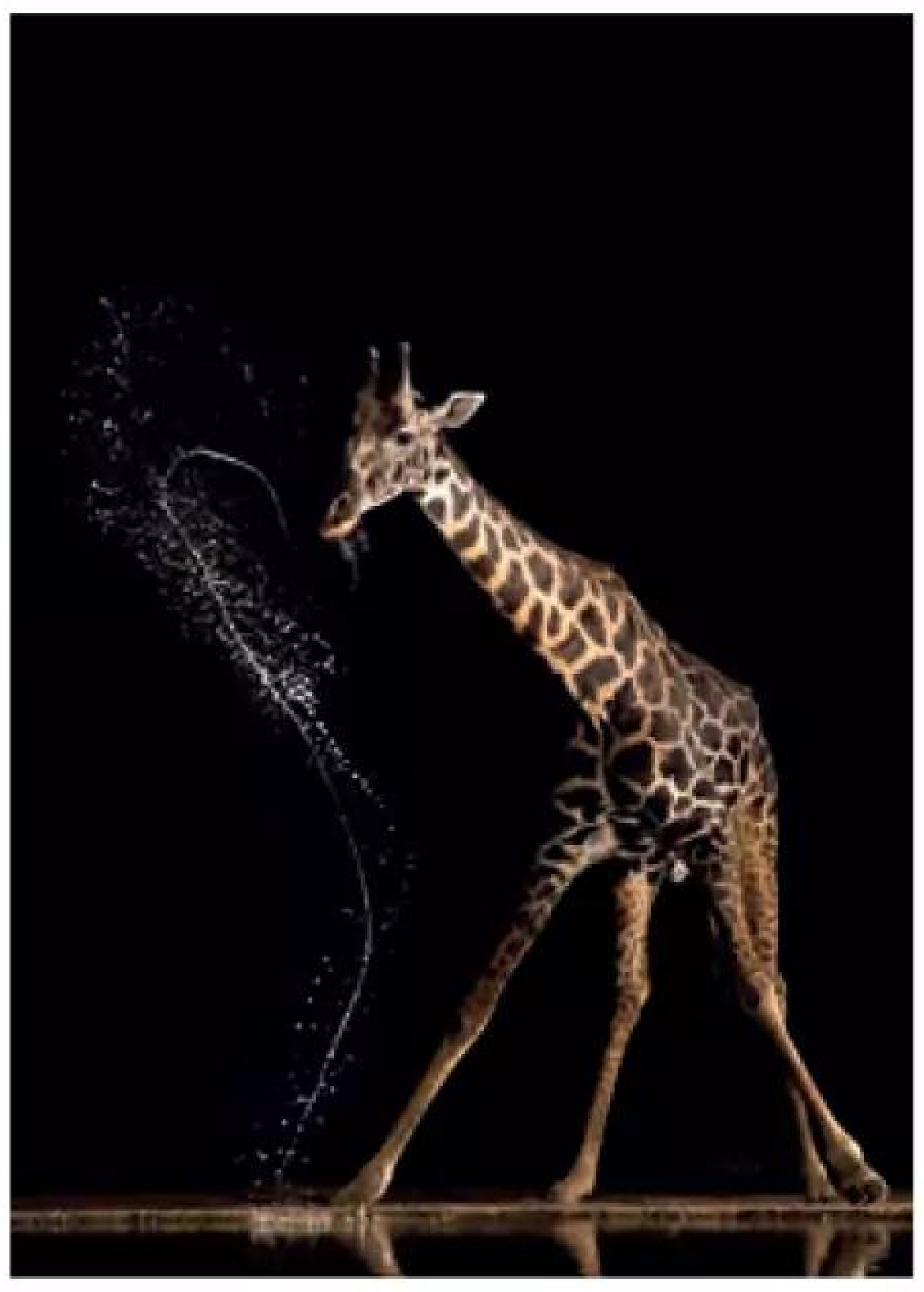
RUNNER-UP

ANIMALS & NATURE









NEIL KENDALL

@bucketlisttravelphotos

DRINKS AFTER DARK

NEIL Kendall describes himself as a full-time "money worrier" and an amateur photographer with a passion for wildlife.

"I studied photography at school over 40 years ago, developing black-and-white photos," he says. But family and career commitments put his passion on hold, and it wasn't until about 10 years ago that he began making time for it again.

"Interestingly, I spent a lot of time advising clients on life balance, staying active, and having a hobby – but I wasn't taking my own advice," he admits.

Starting with a modest DSLR and kit lens, he took a refresher photography course and watched countless YouTube tutorials. His work truly took off after discovering wildlife photography and the possibilities of night shots, sparked by a trip to Kenya's Shompole Wilderness Lodge.

"The lodge has an amazing night hide at a waterhole," he explains. "The wildlife could come and go freely, but the chance to photograph large wild mammals less than 10 metres away, at eye level, with controlled lighting, was irresistible."

The result is a body of work marked by remarkable moments, technical excellence, and consistent quality.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

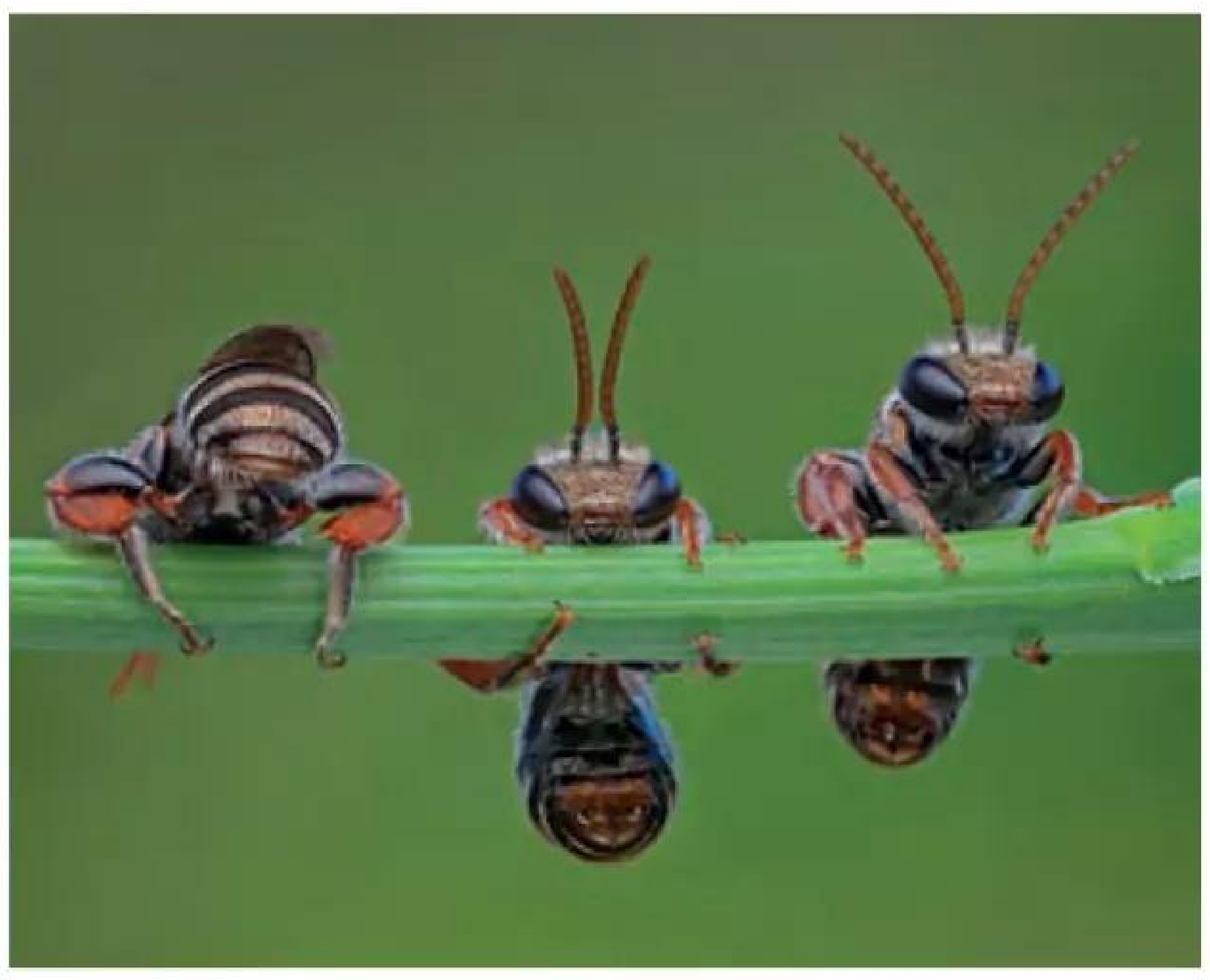
LISA MICHELE BURNS: A striking portfolio capturing these wild moments we're rarely able to witness. Every image is such a standout with the reflections and use of light, however the final image of the giraffe and the water trail takes the cake for me – what an incredible moment!

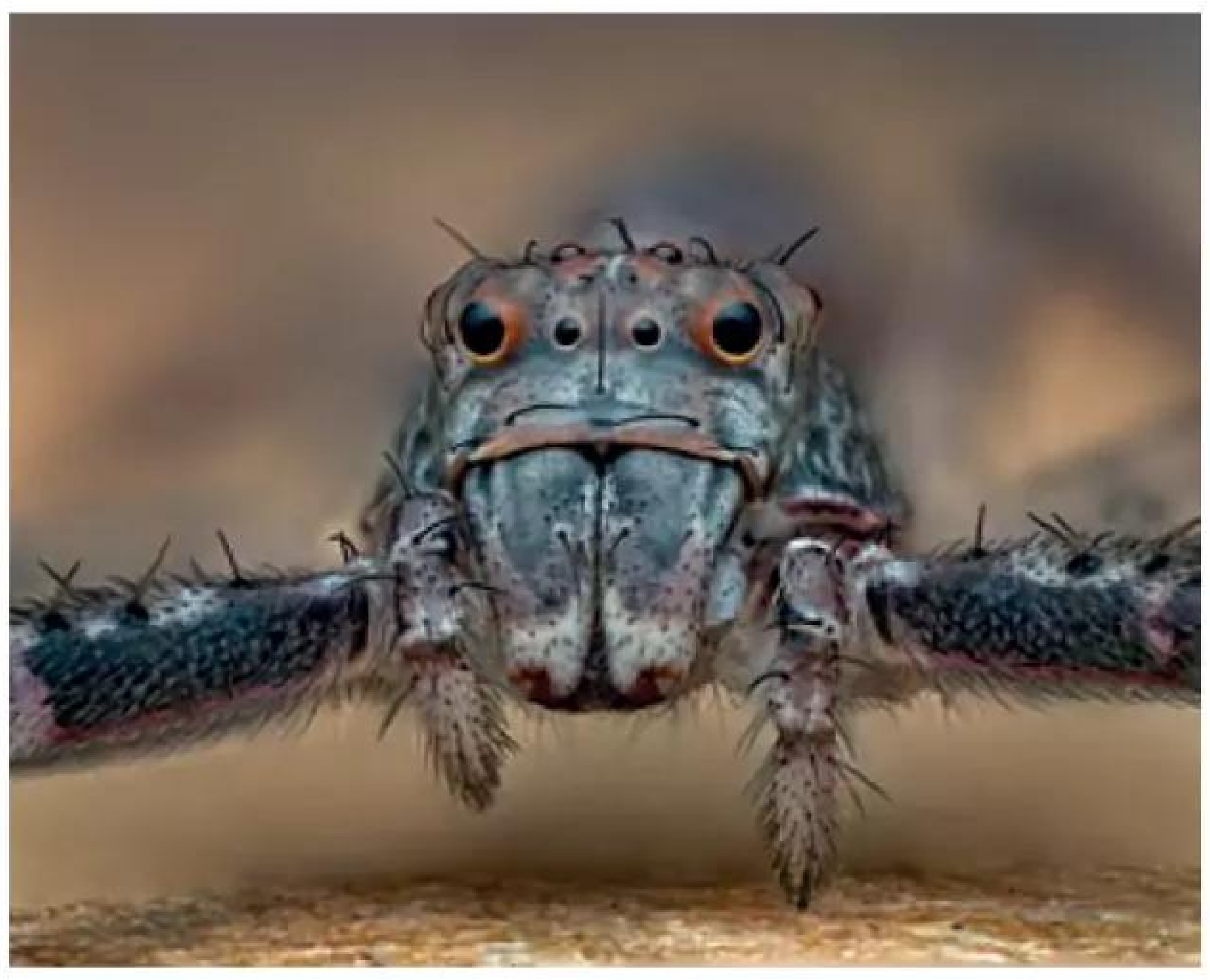
DOUG GIMESY: Each image here is beautiful in its own right, capturing a moment in time, telling a story, and offering something you'd be delighted to hang on a wall. But using this as a starting point, then applying consistency in theme such as wildlife at a waterhole, then combining the consistent compositions with each image showing a reflection, as well as the lighting, processing, and use of a portrait format, elevates the work into a wonderfully cohesive series that I hope will be displayed together.

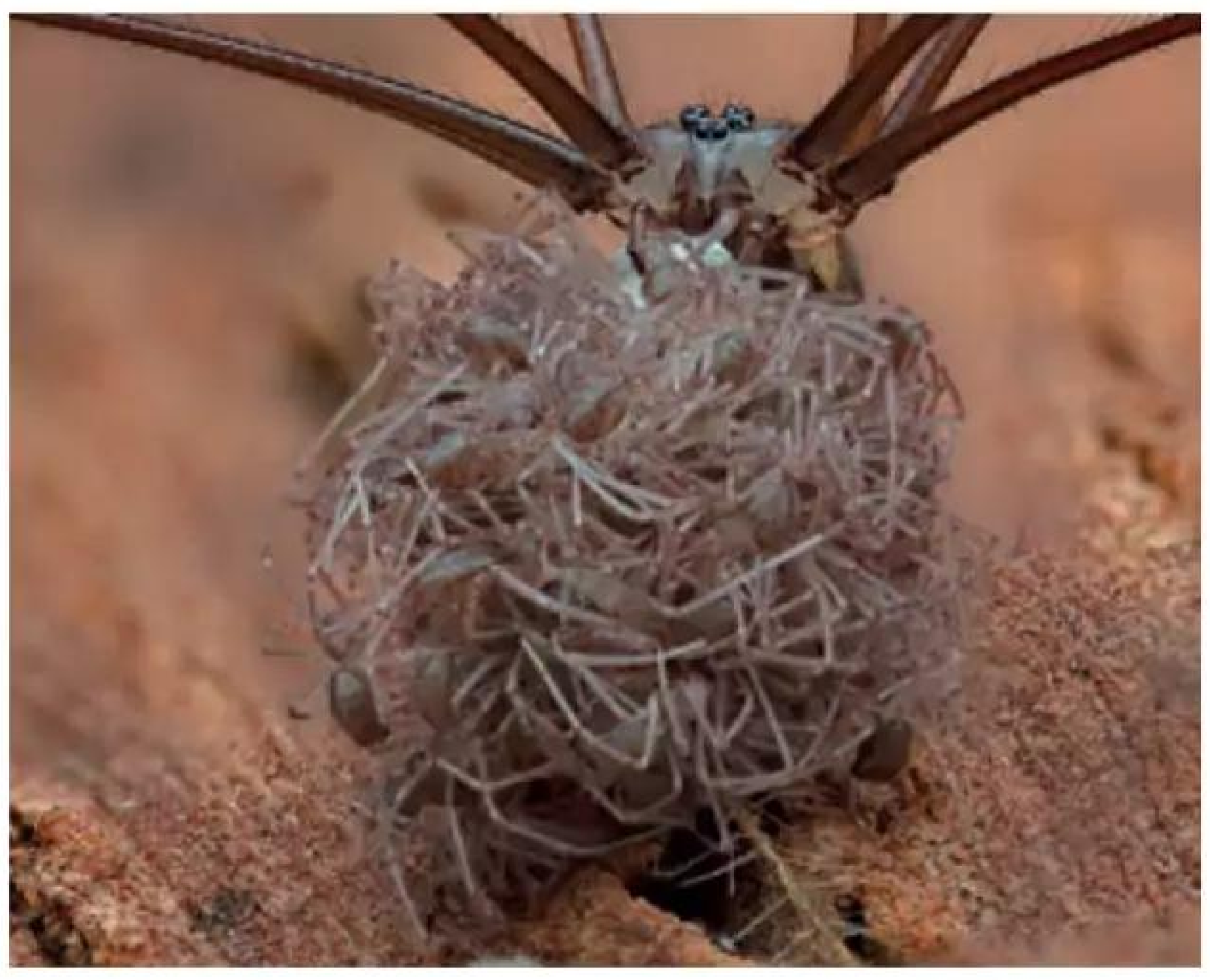
PRIZE: $200 Ted's Cameras voucher.

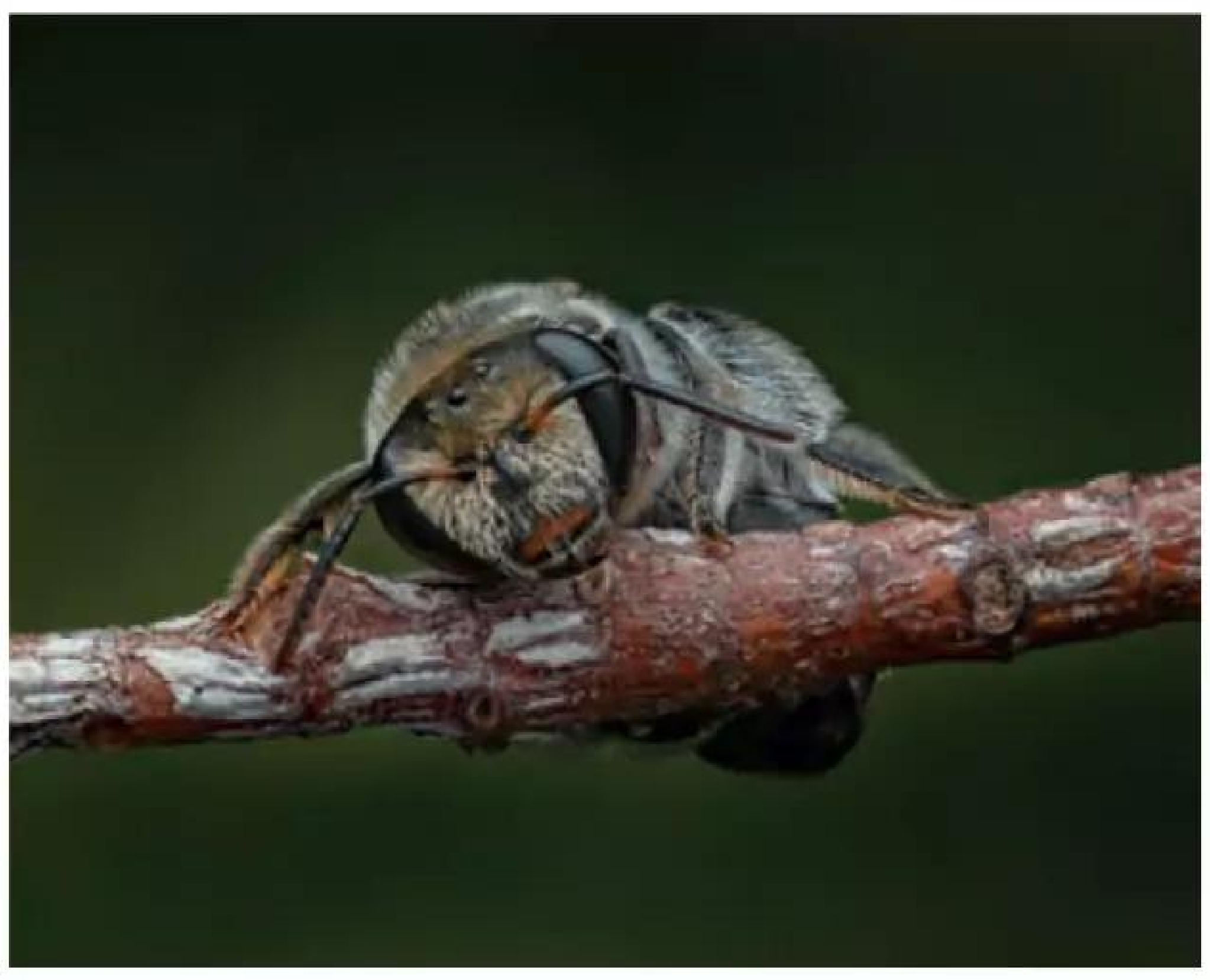
3. CRAIG LOECHEL

MY VIEW OF LIFE SEEN IN GREAT DETAIL



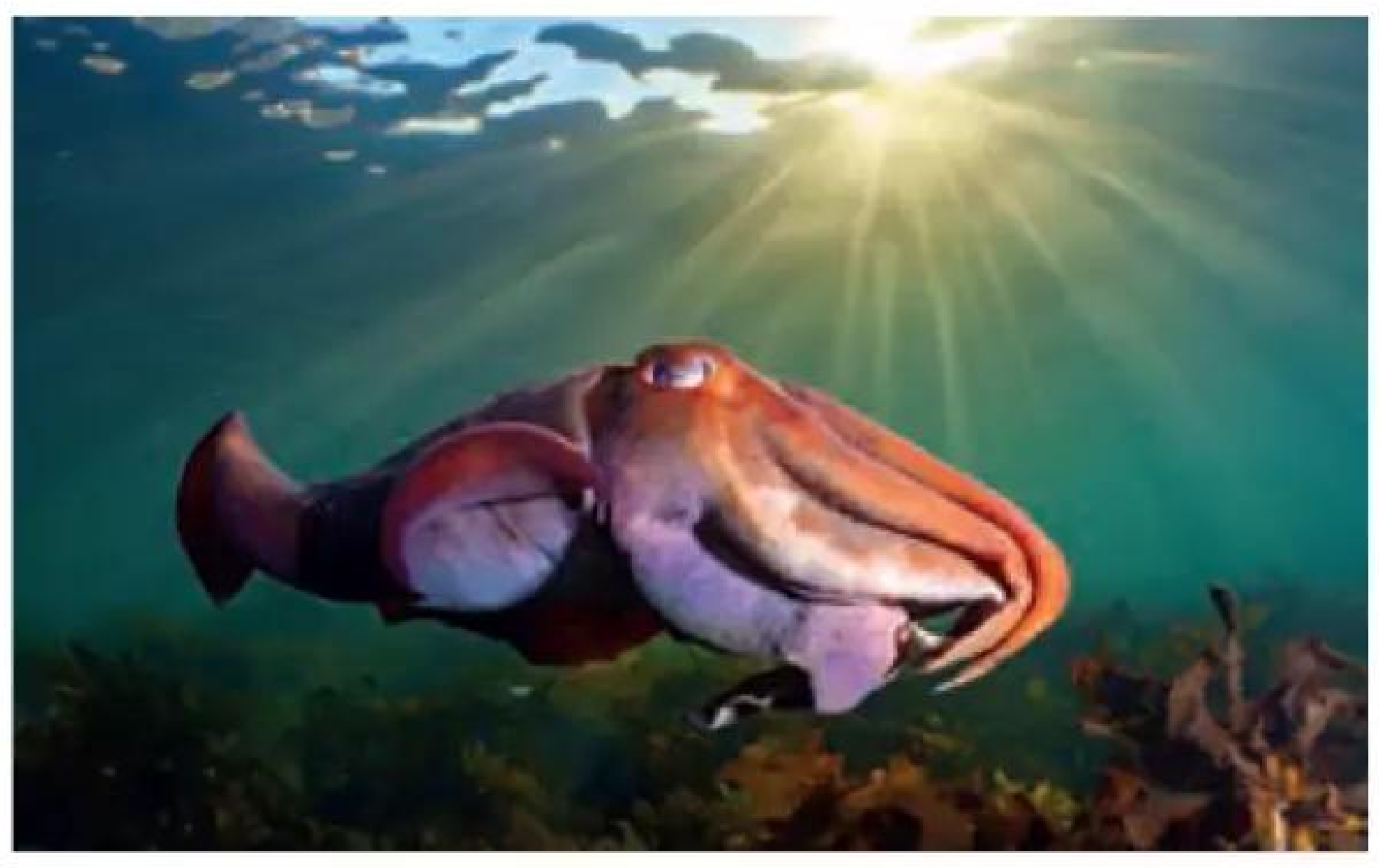


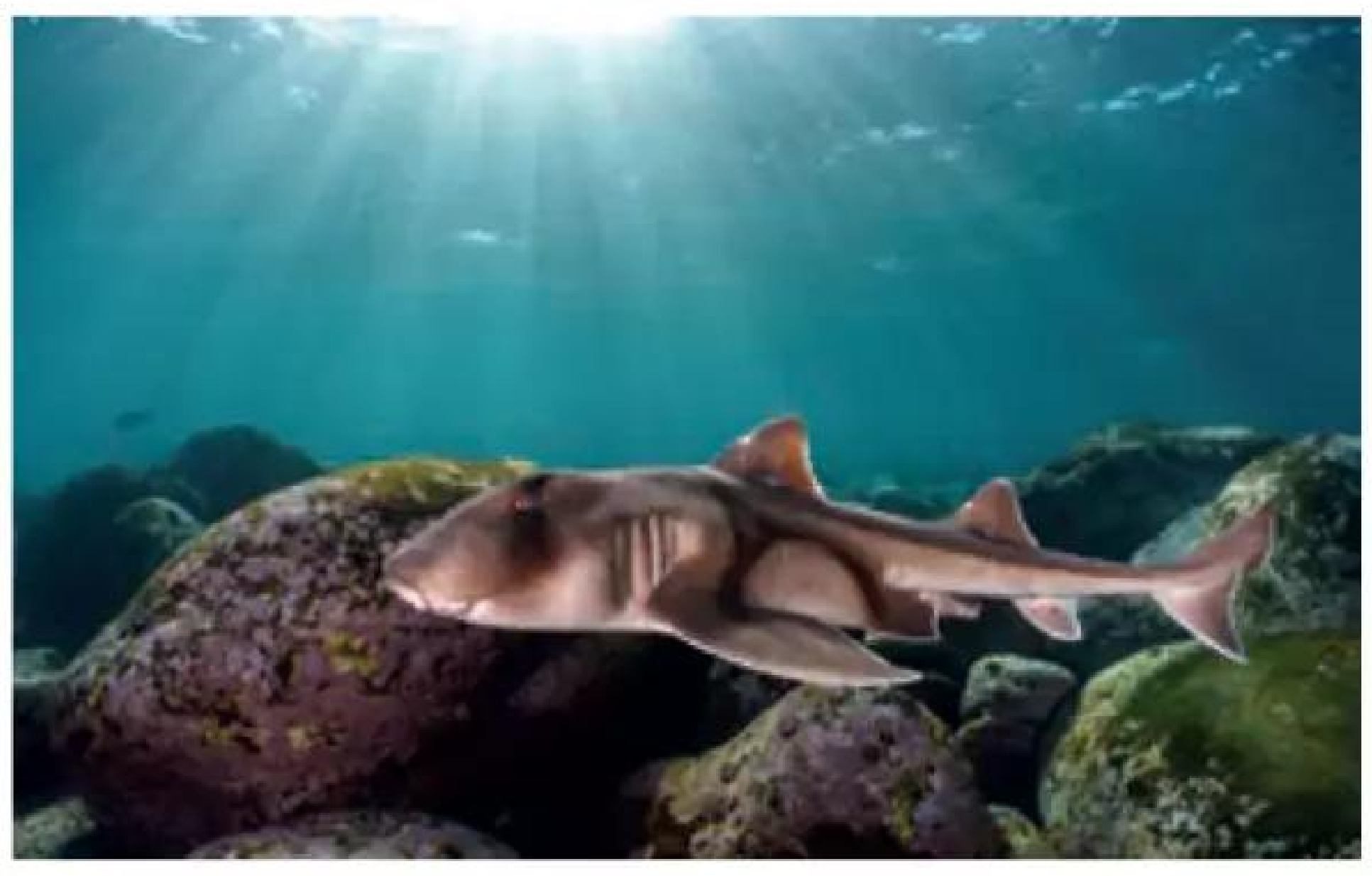


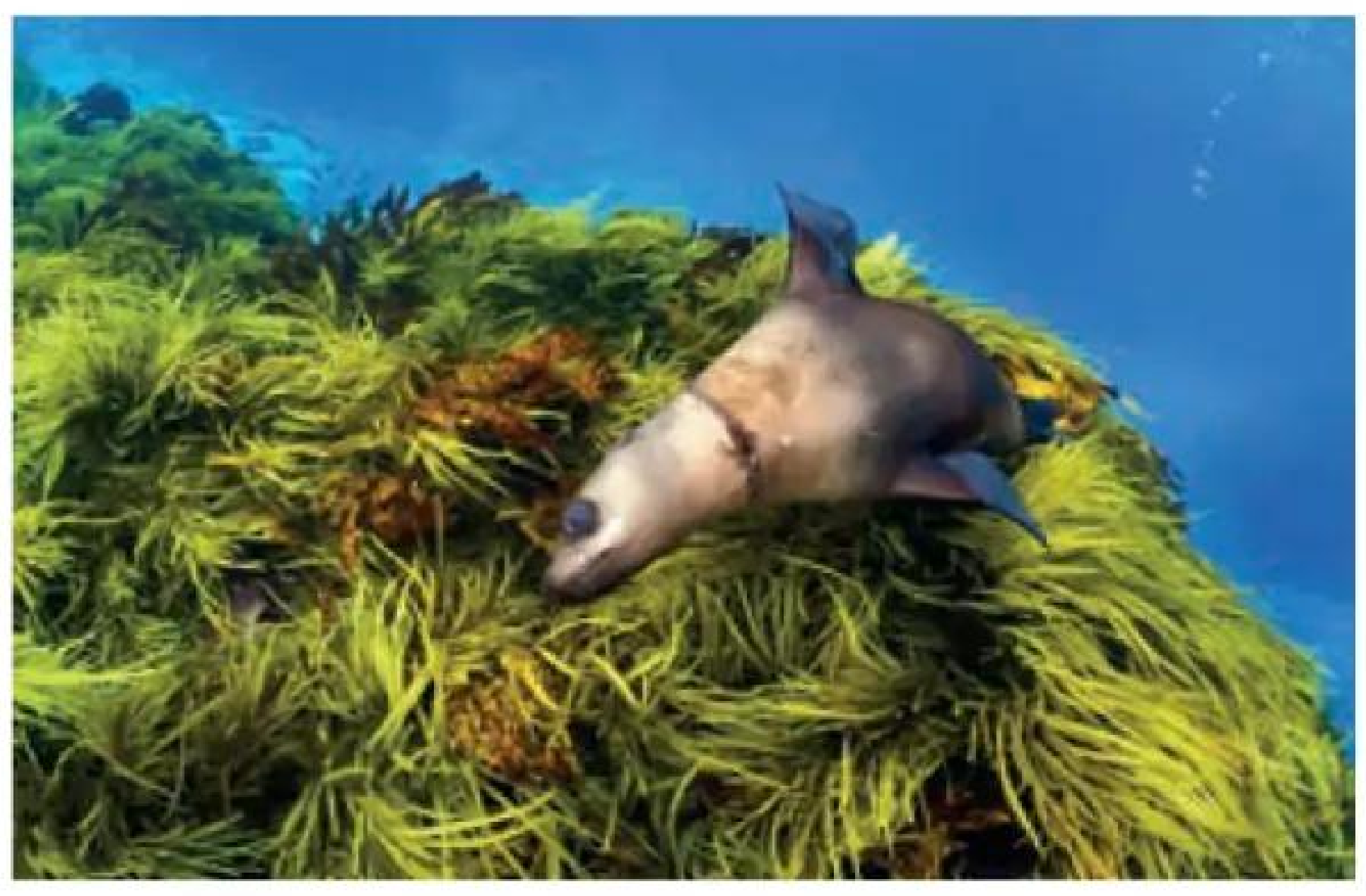


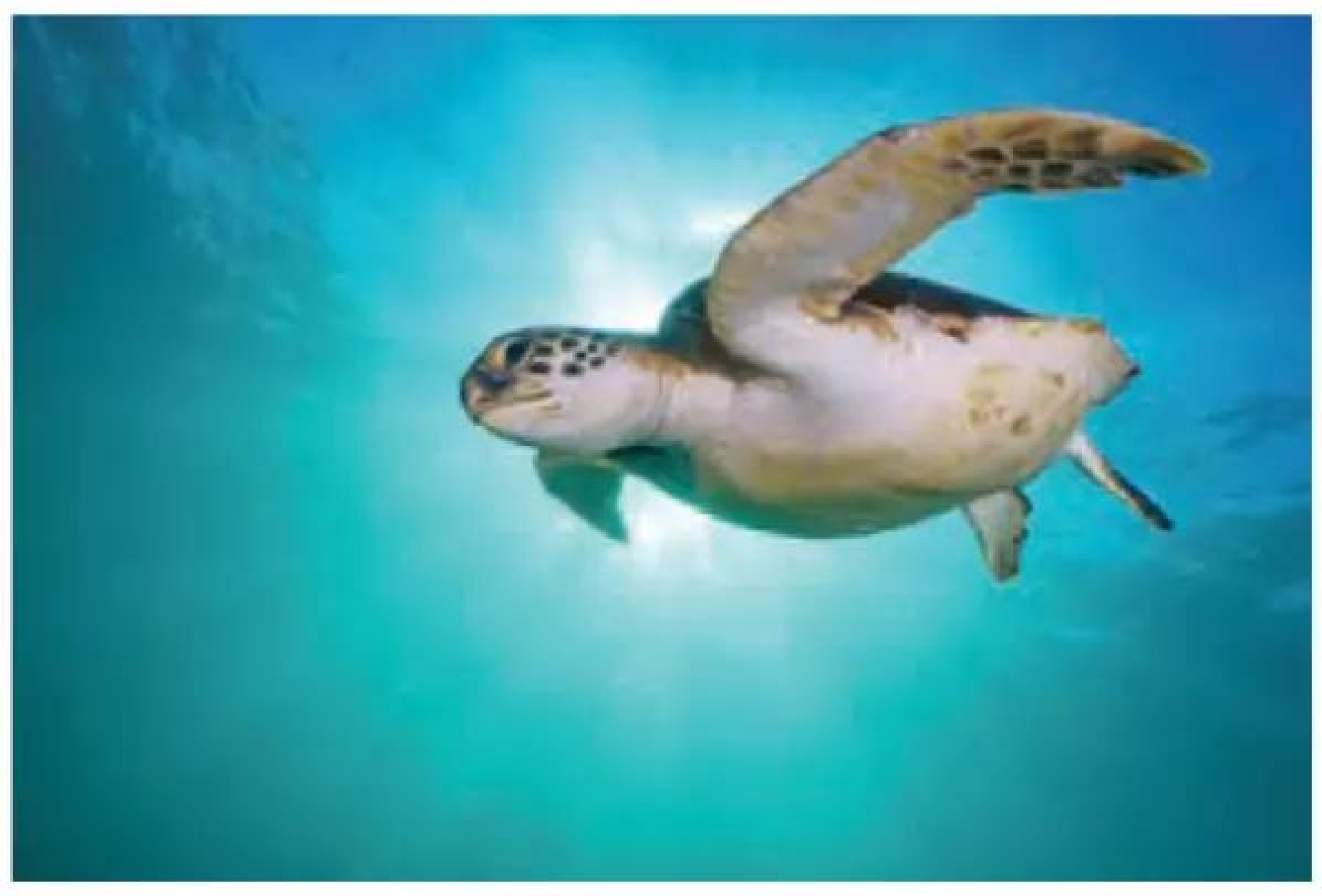
4. PETER MCGEE

OUR MAGNIFICENT OCEANS



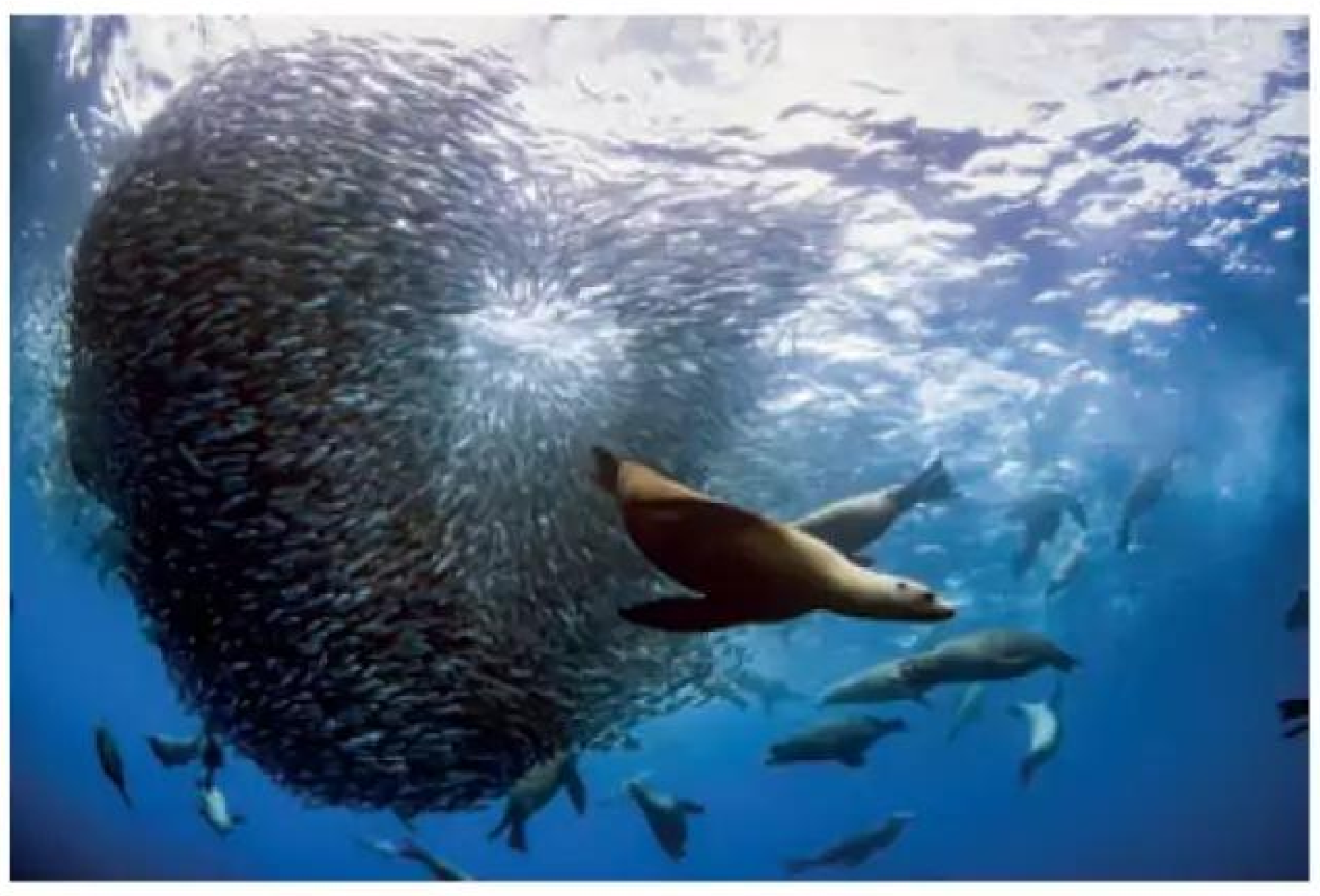


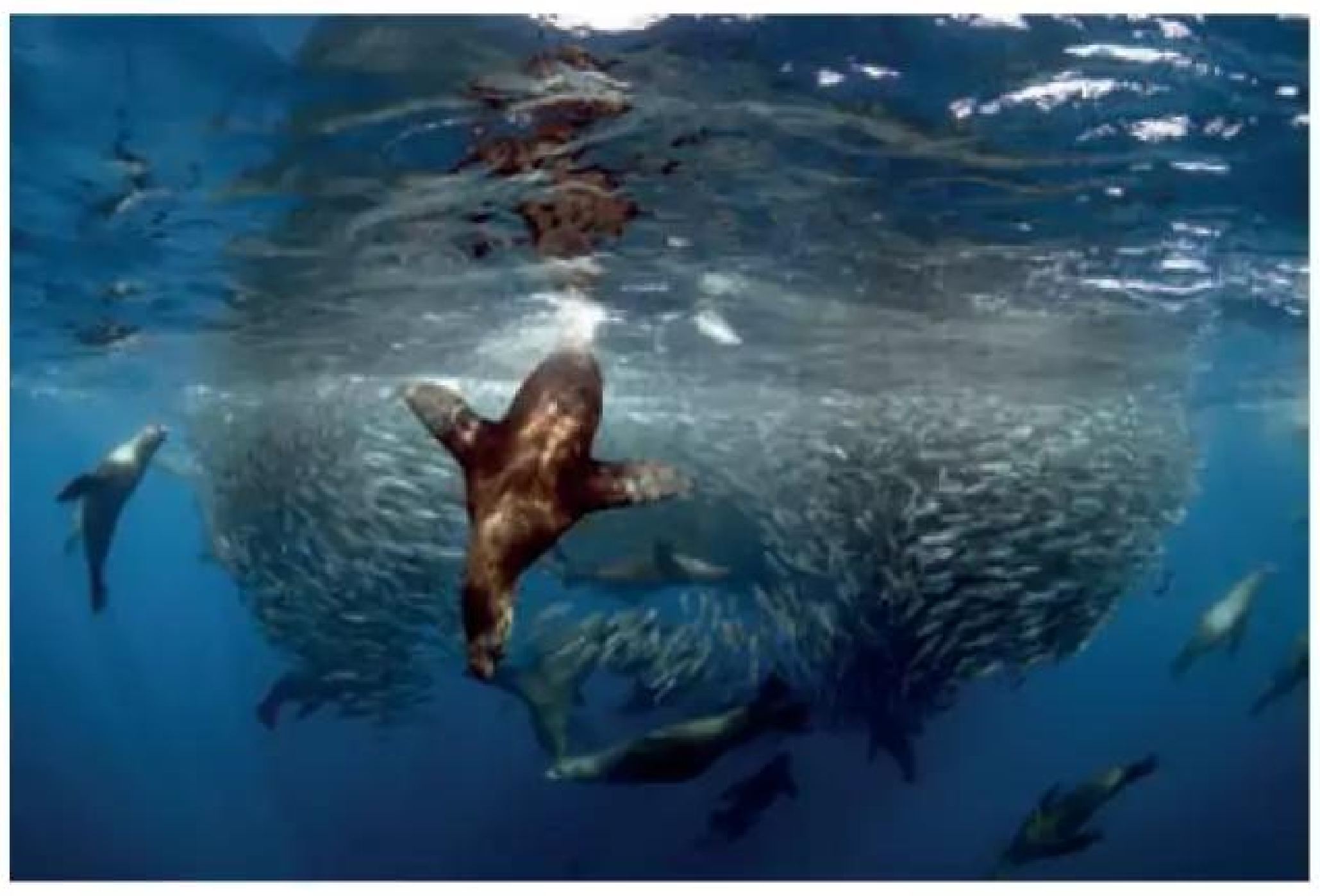


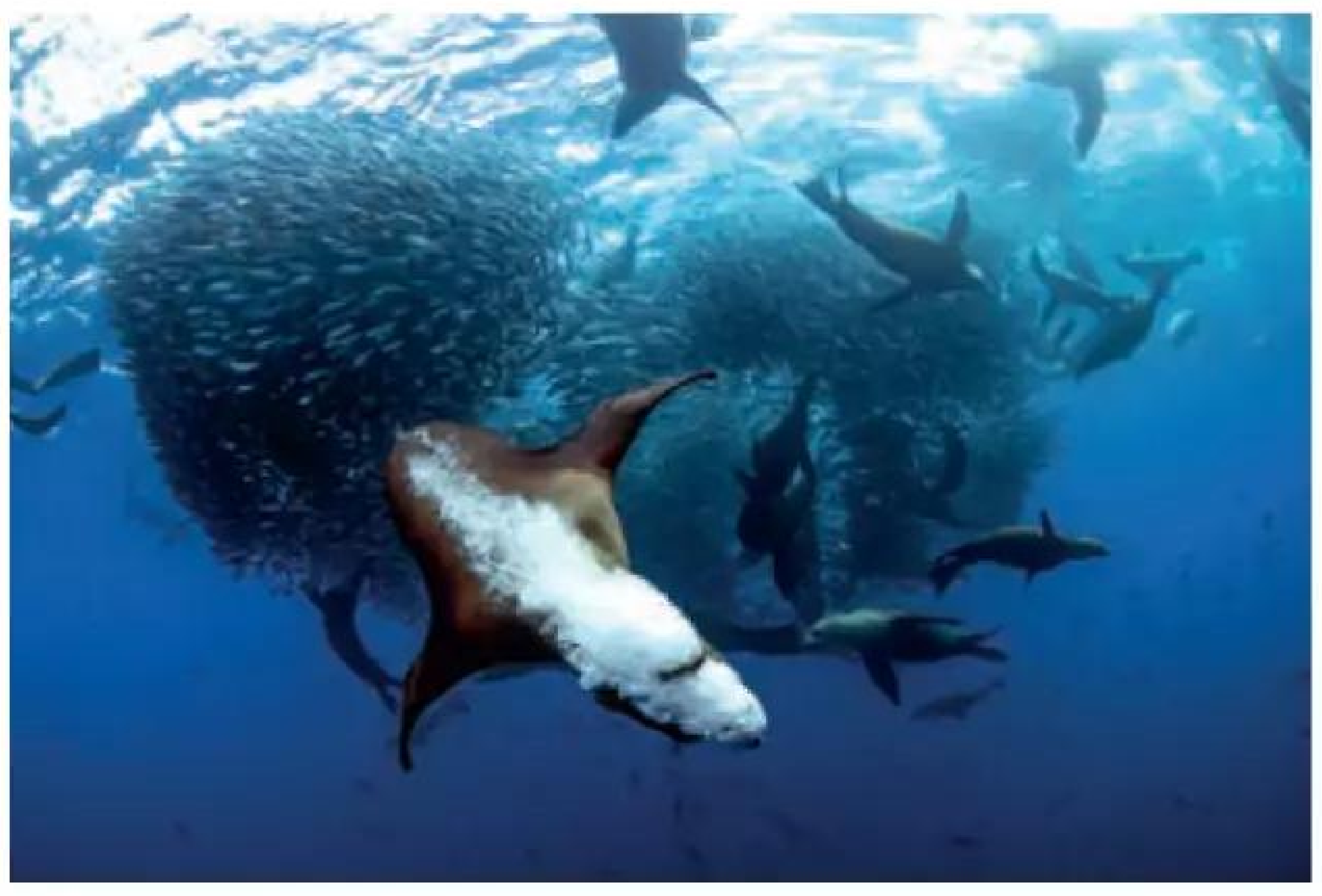


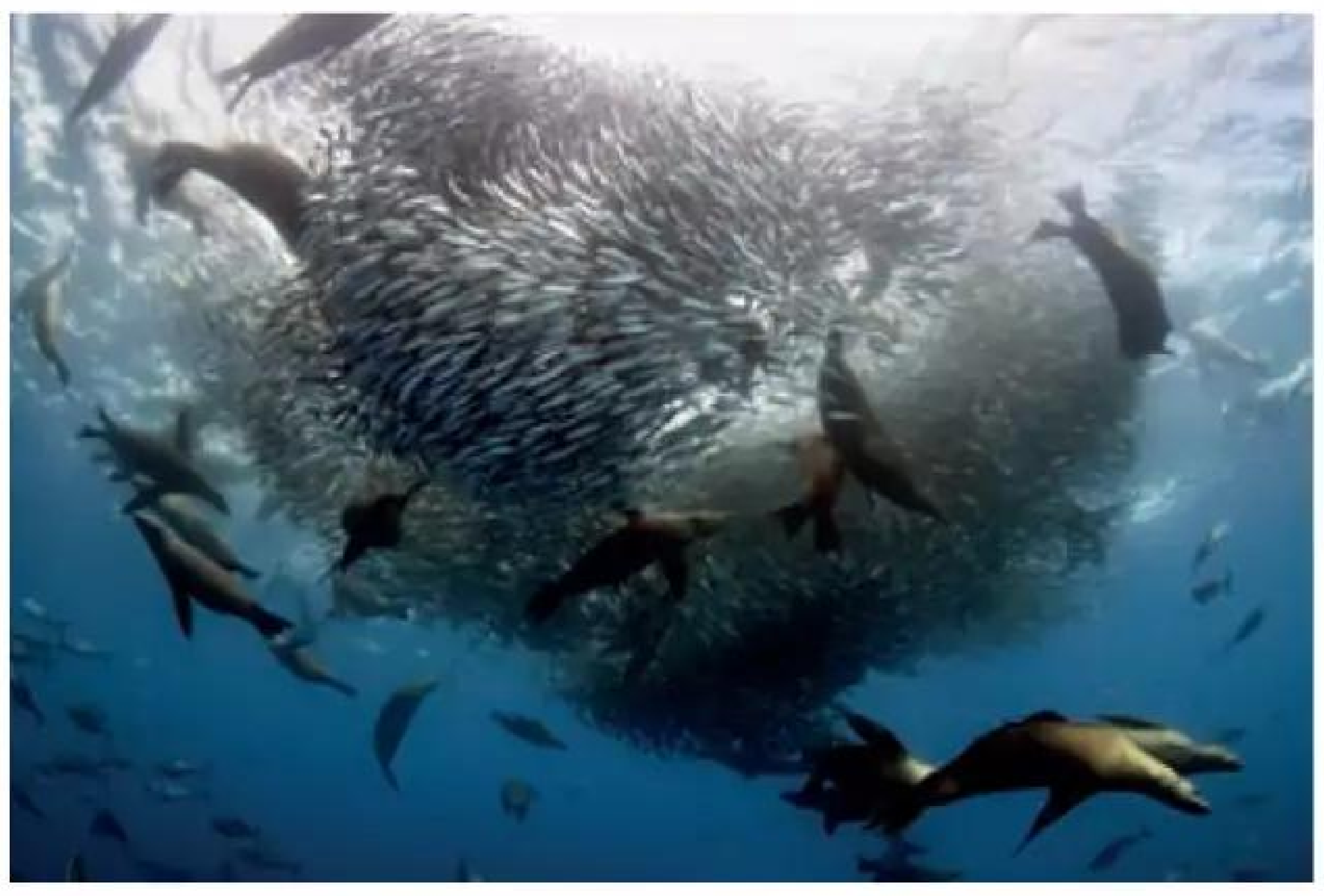
5. JOSH BLANK

SEA LIONS VS BAITBALL









6. SHANNI ARCHER

40 TONNE BALLERINA

7. BRIAN LOVE

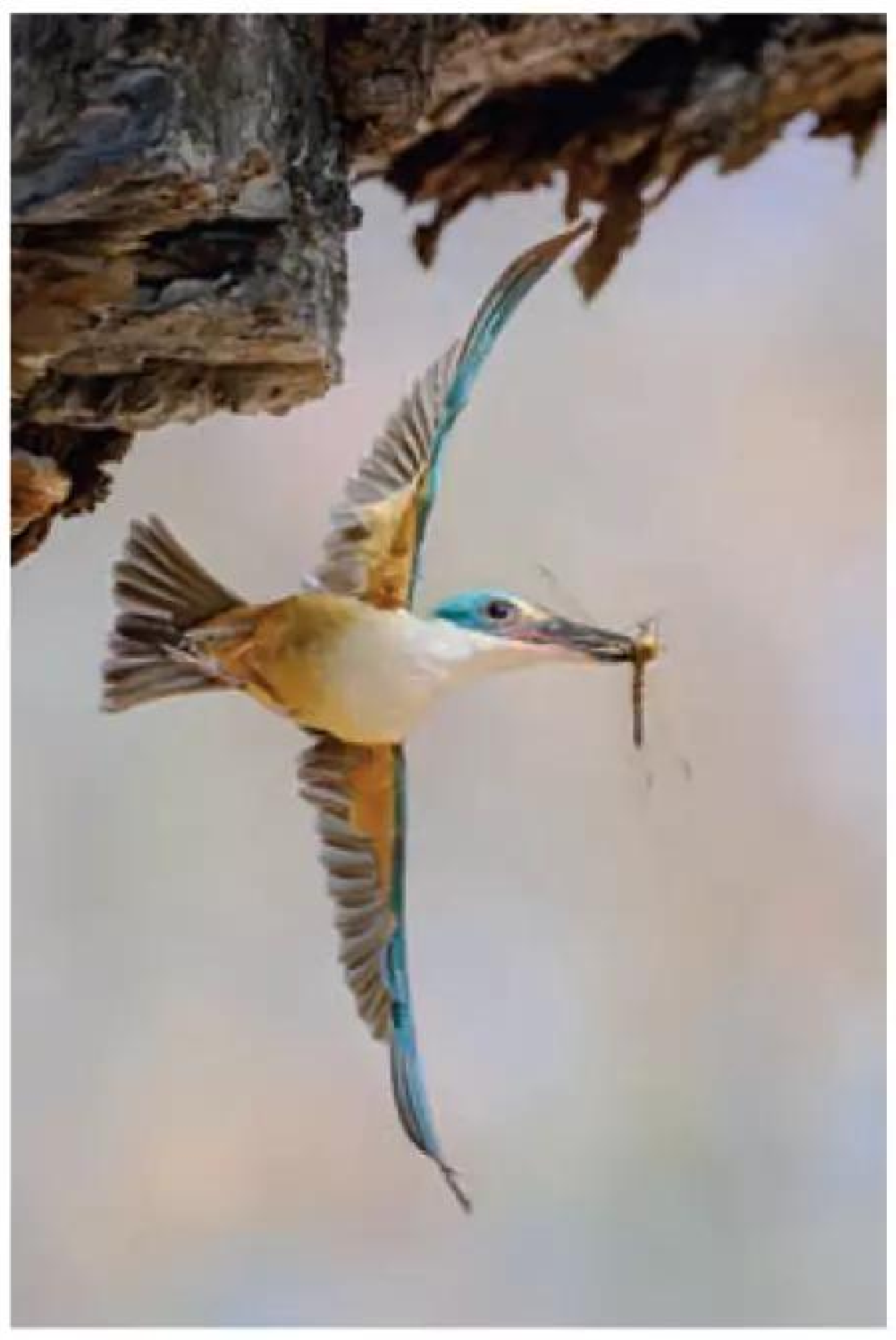
THE LIVING DESERT NAMIBIA

8. JARI CORNELIS

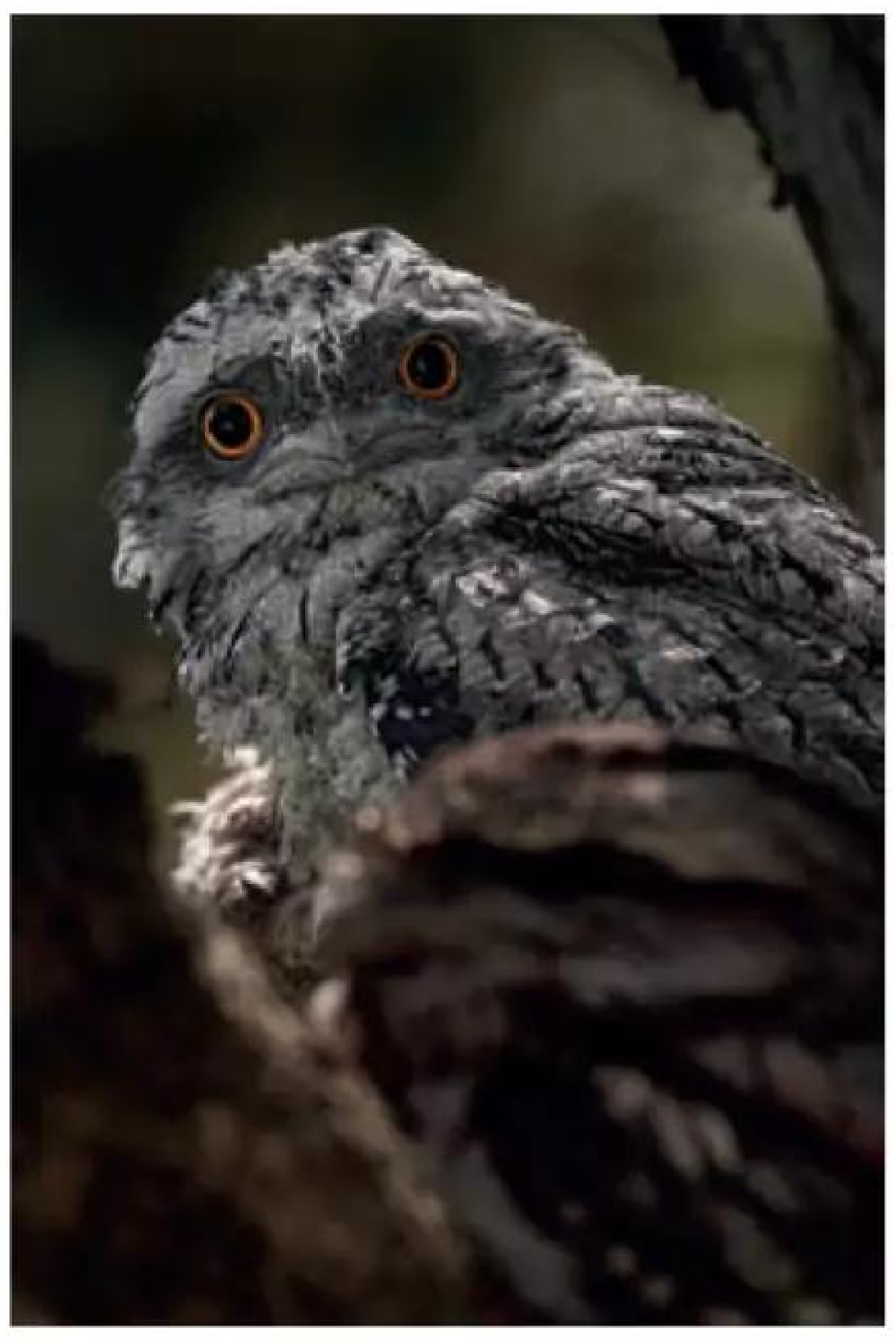
WILD WEST PAPUA

9. EMMA PARKER
FLIGHT AND CATCH OF THE BEE EATERS

10. DONALD CHIN
RHYTHM OF SURVIVAL

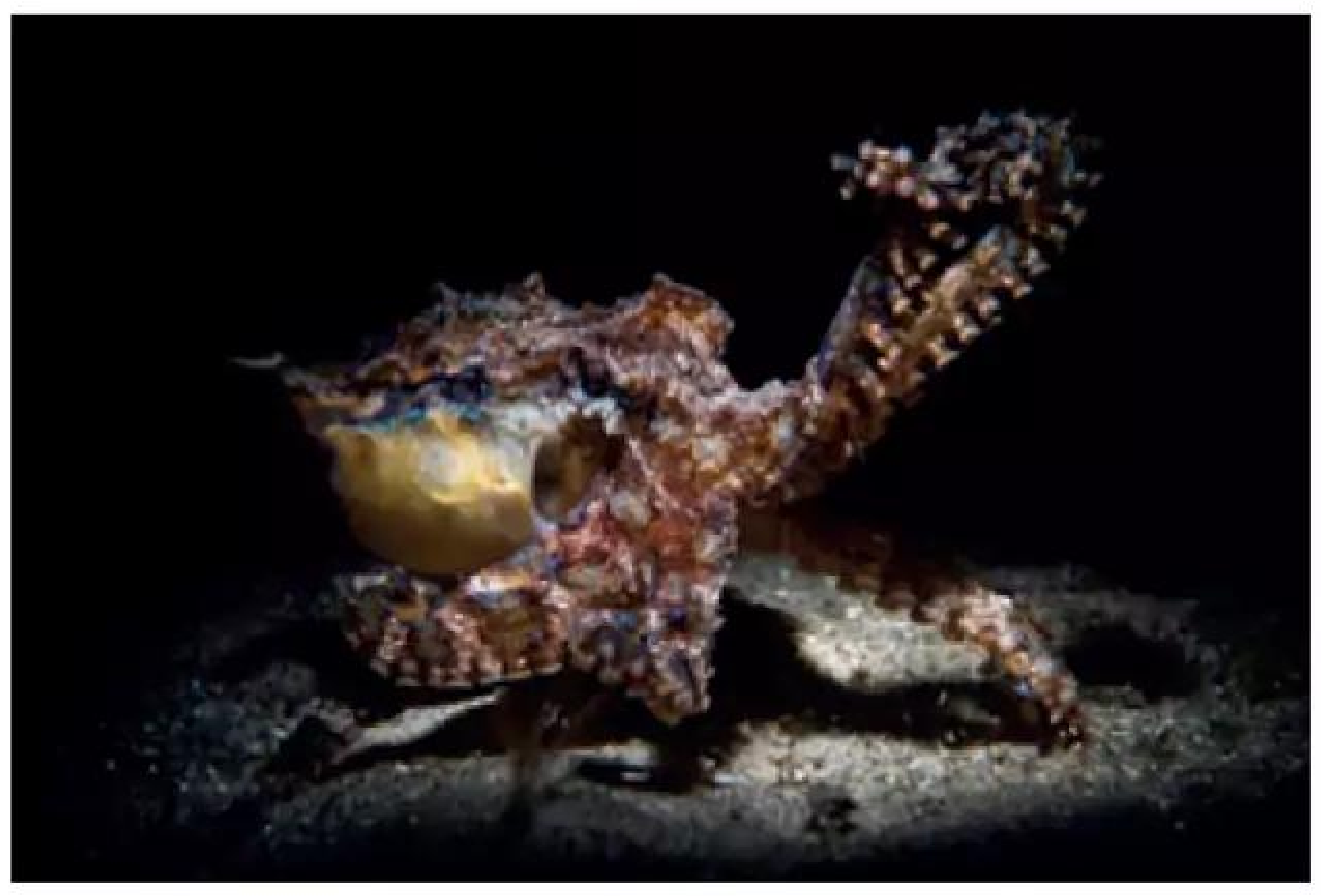


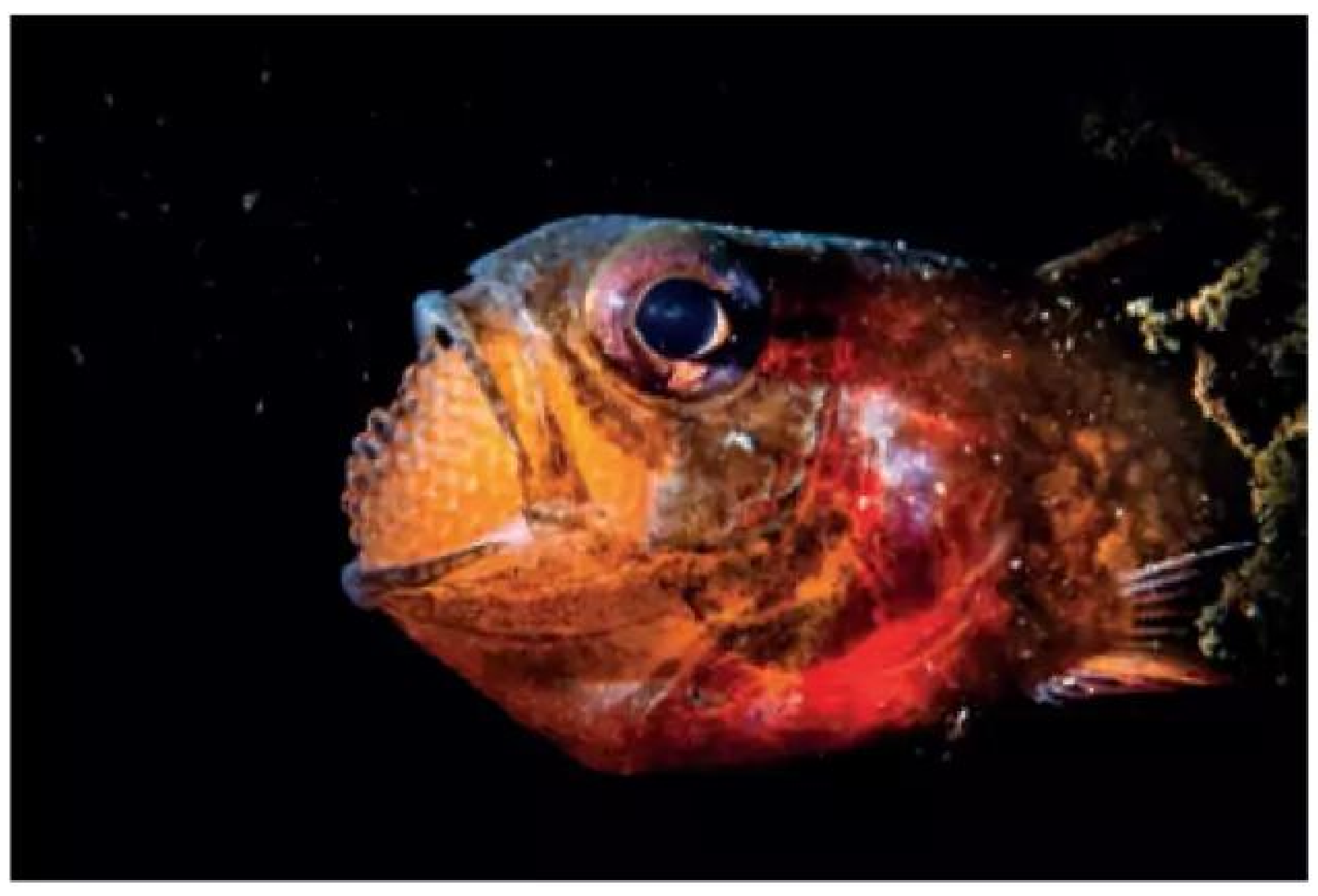
11. DONALD CHIN
A FAMILY OF TAWNY FROGMOUTH

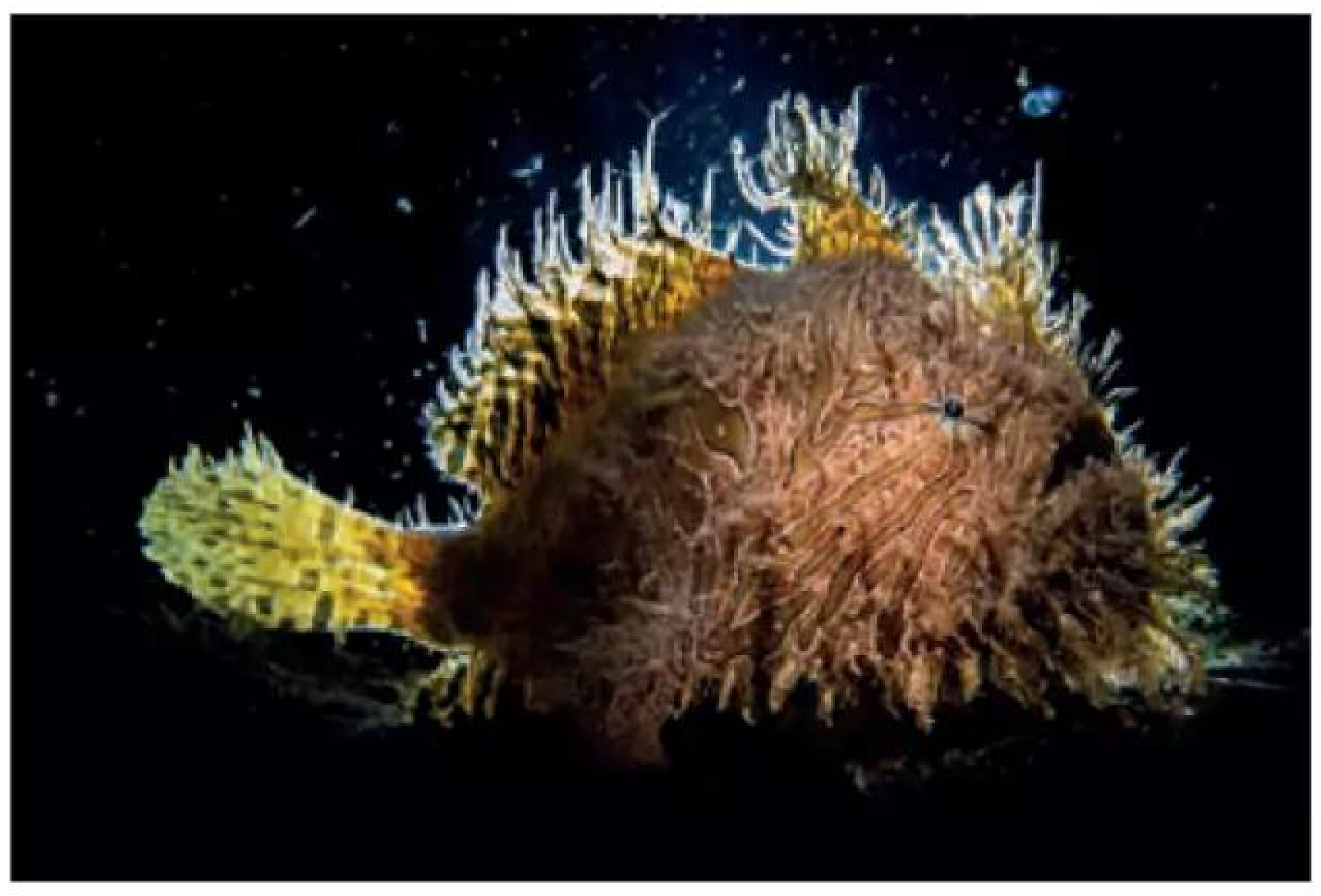


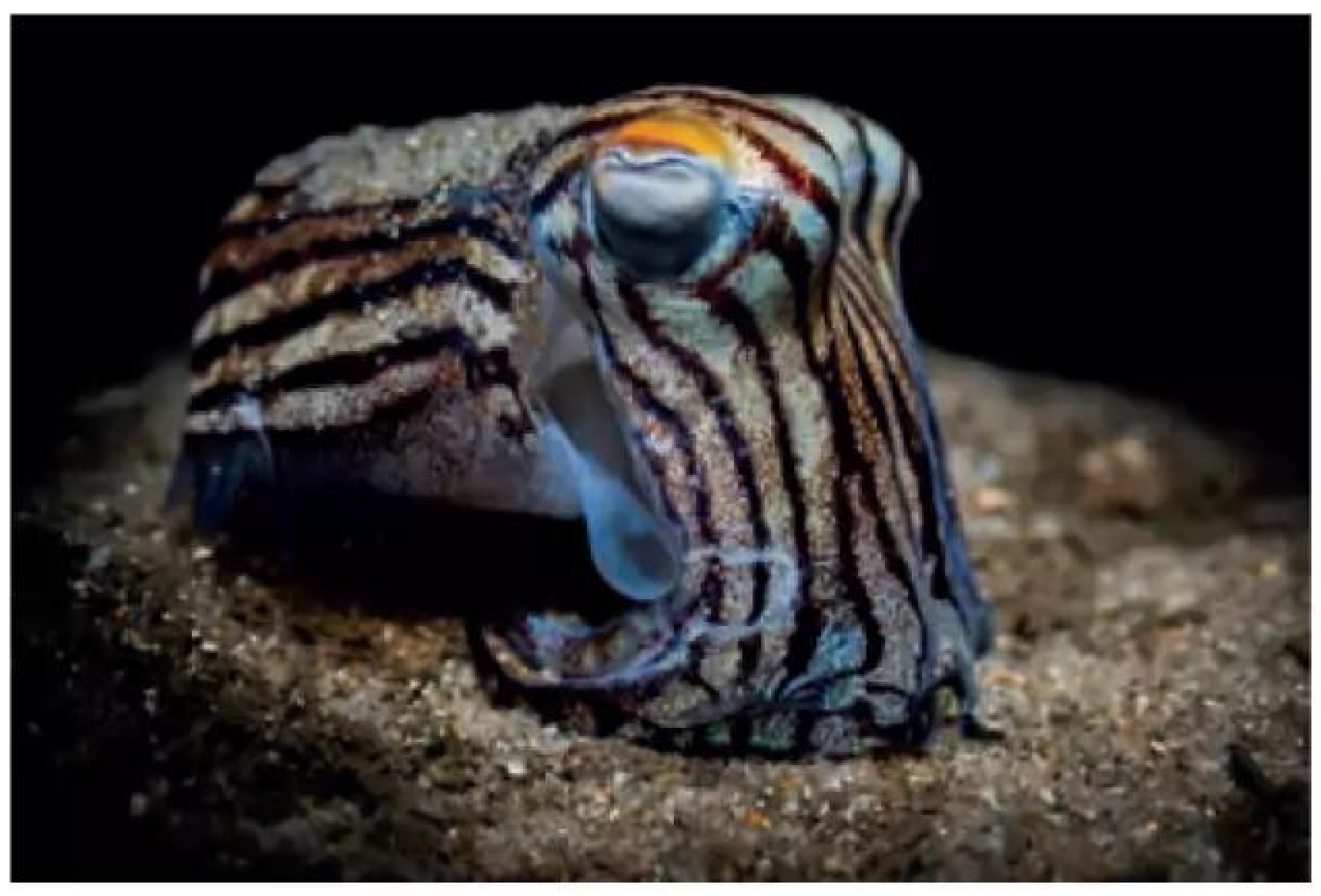
12. DANIEL SLY

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT: SYDNEY HARBOUR



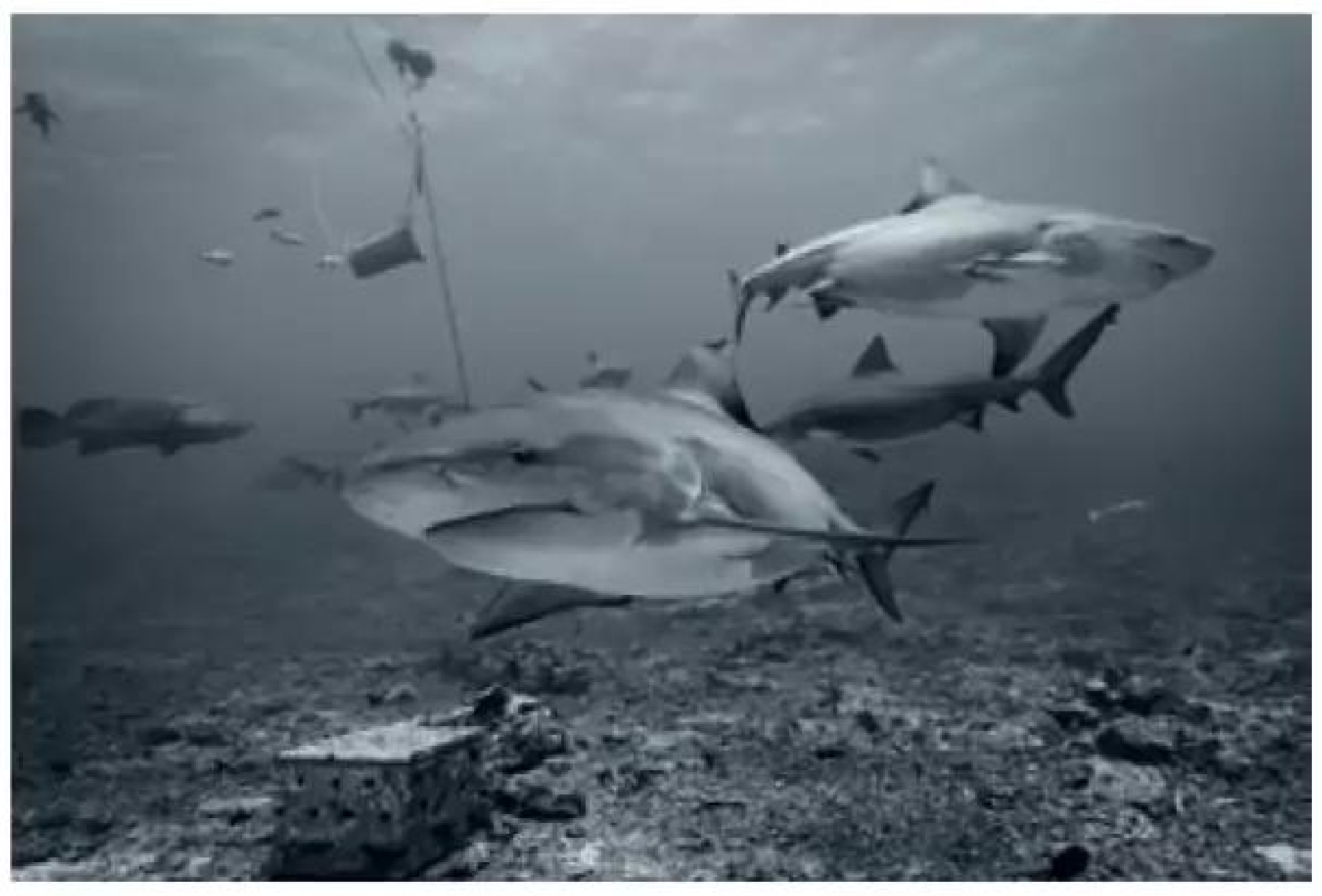


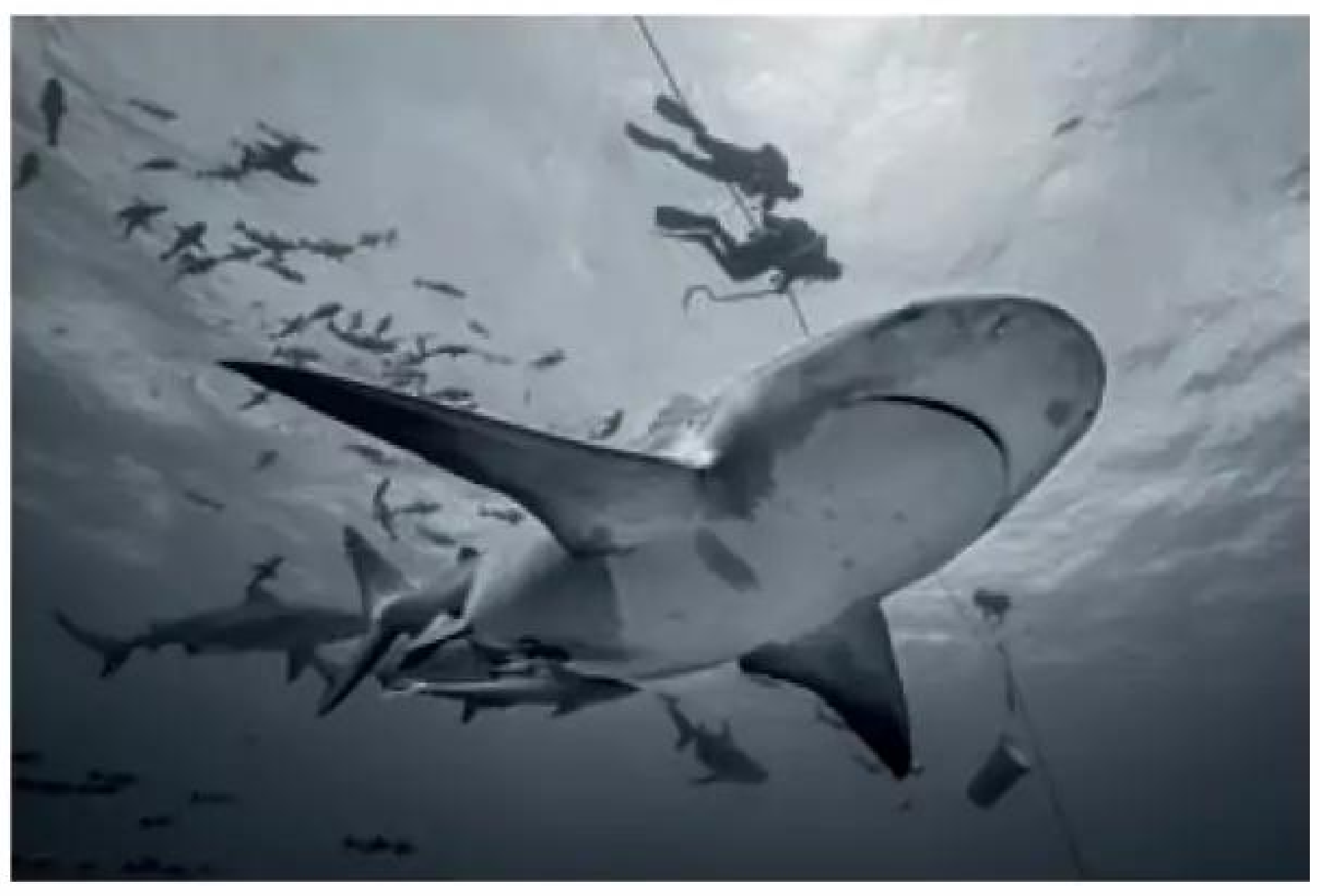


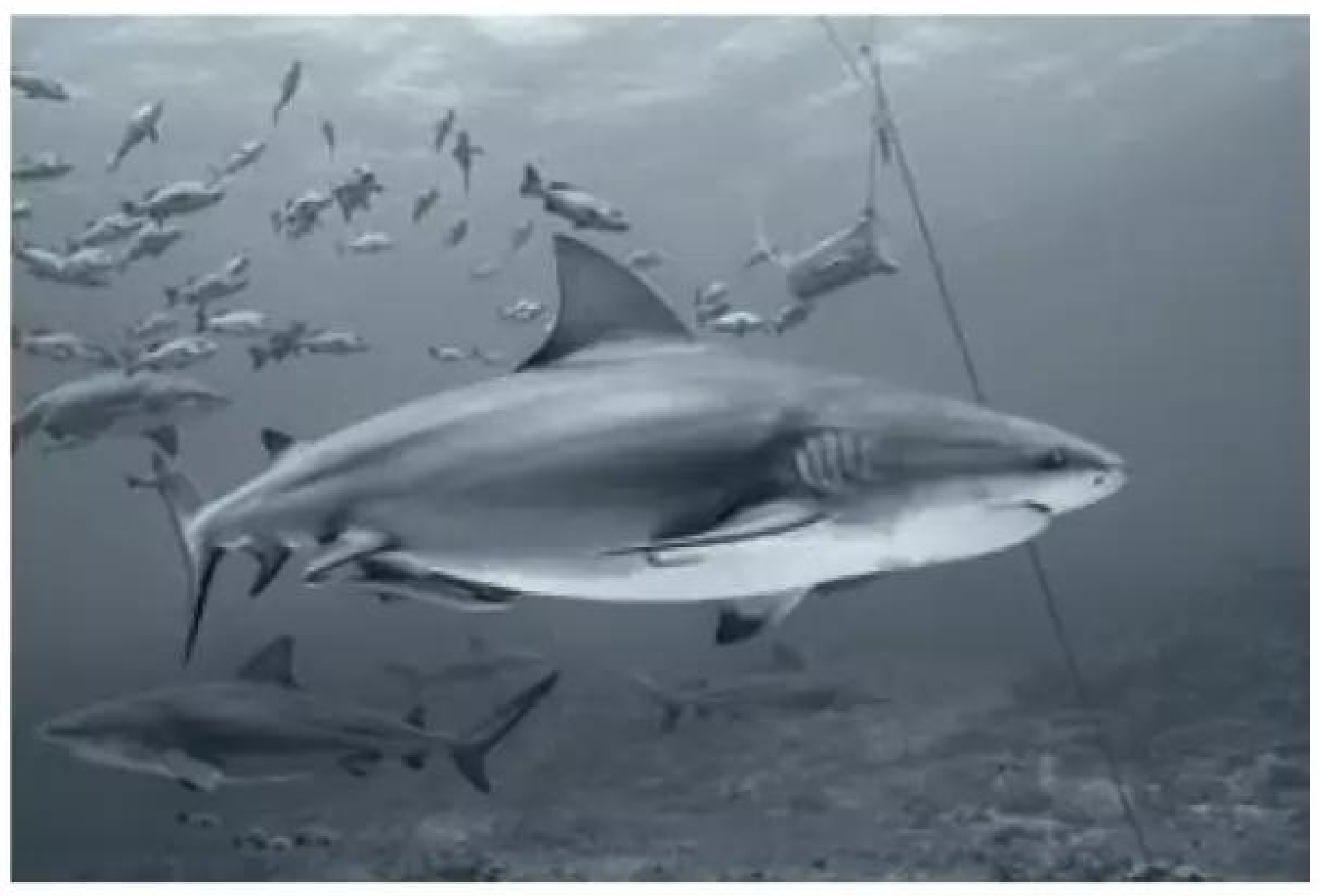


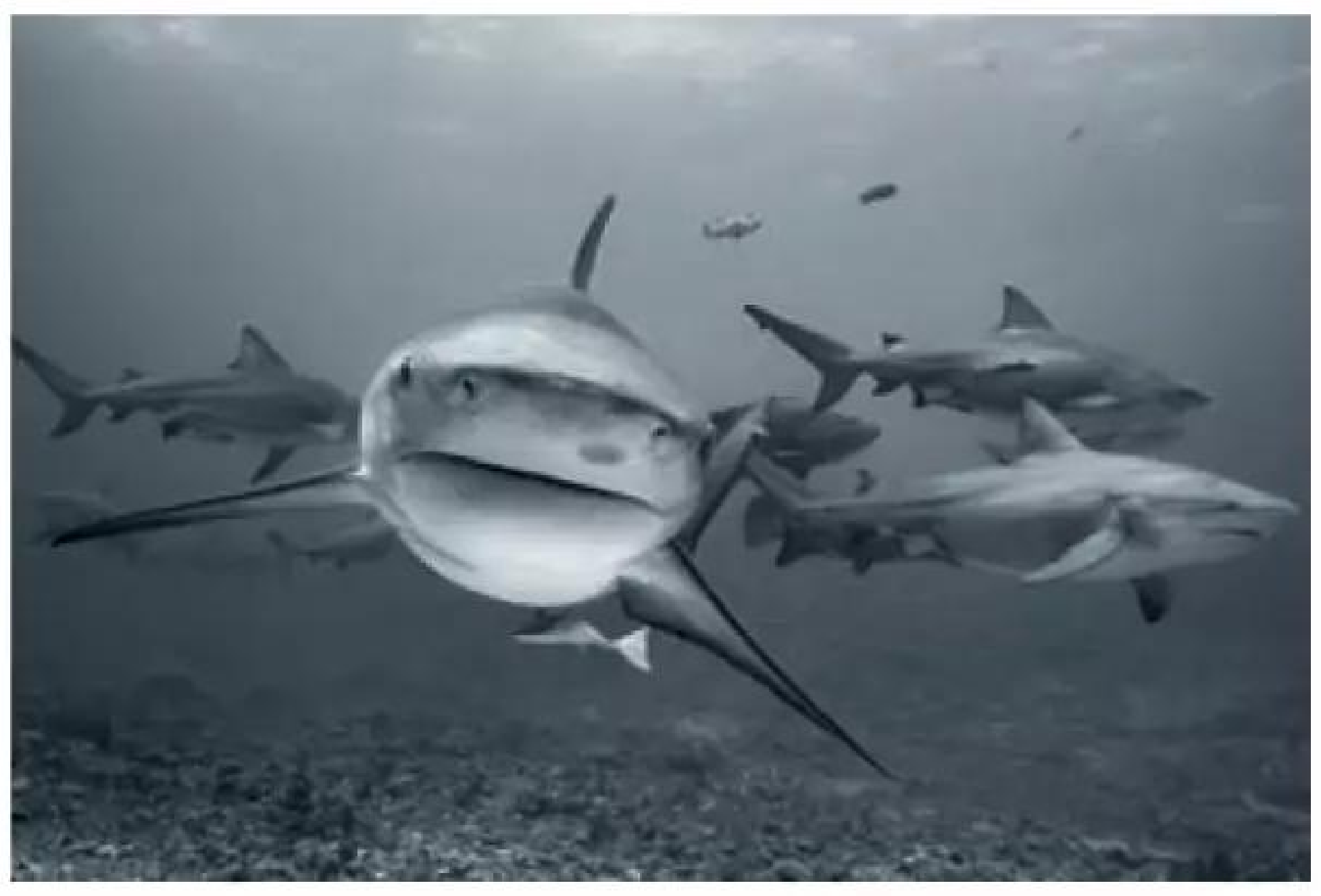
13. ROBERT SMITH

SWIMMING WITH THE BULL PACK



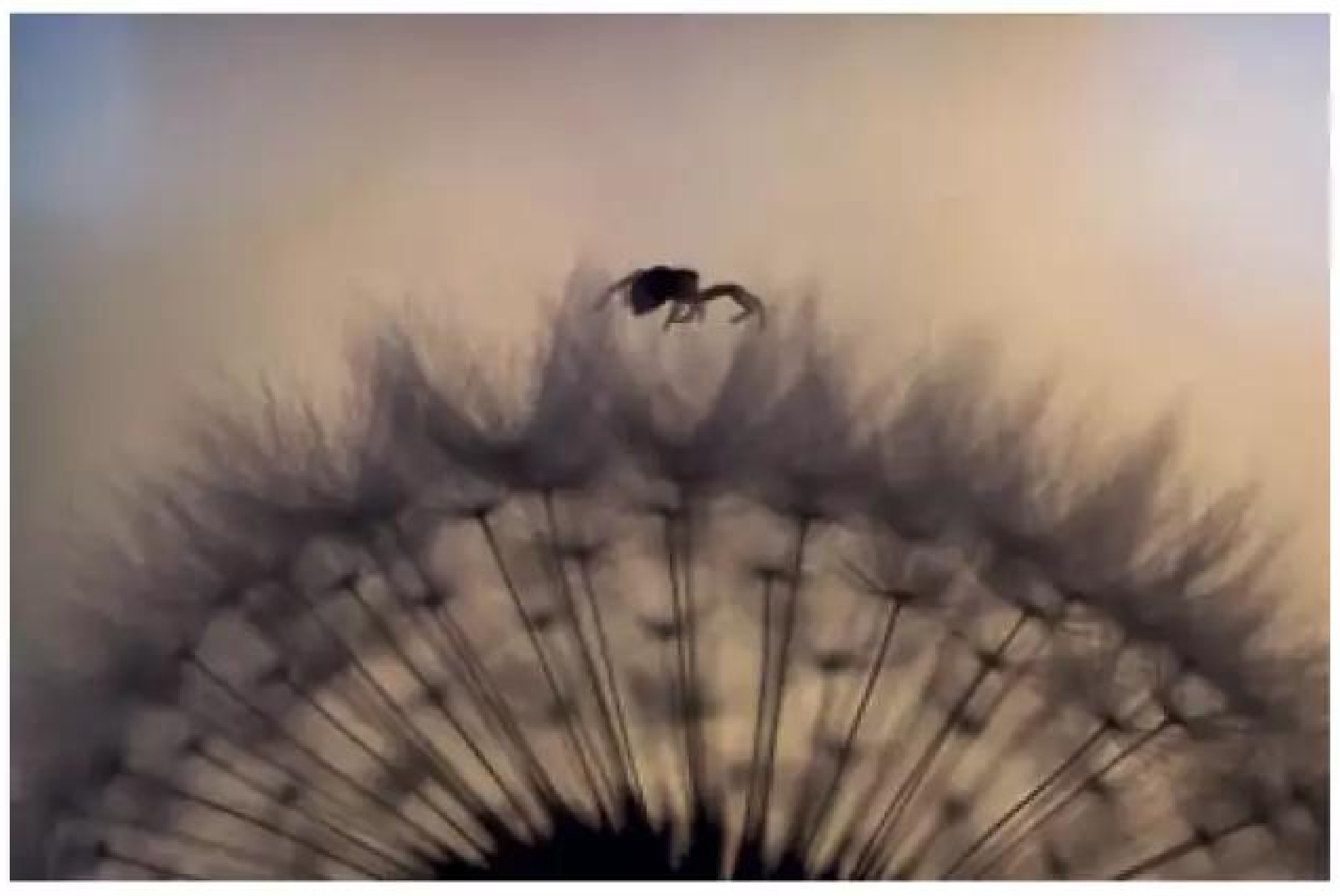


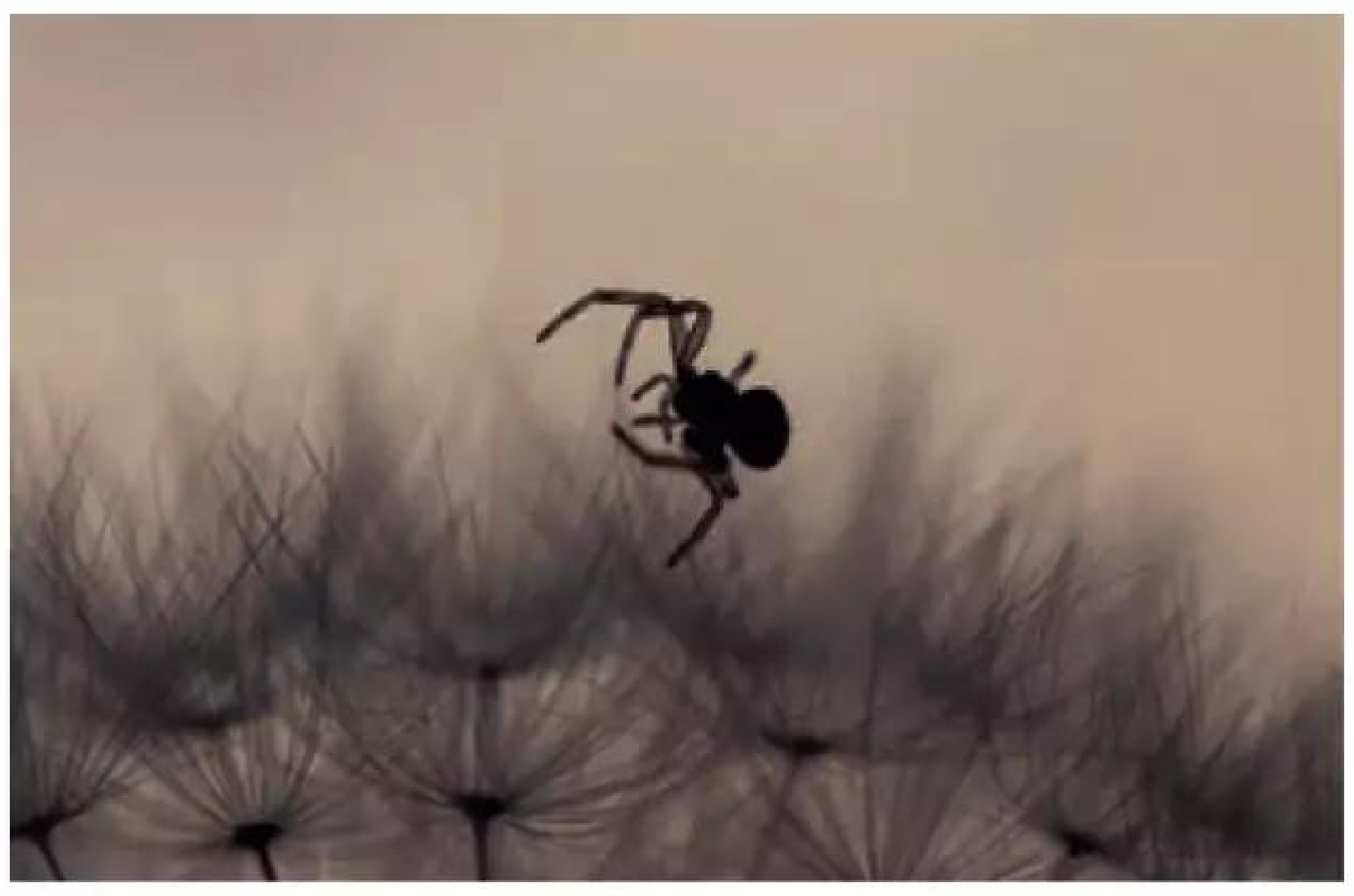


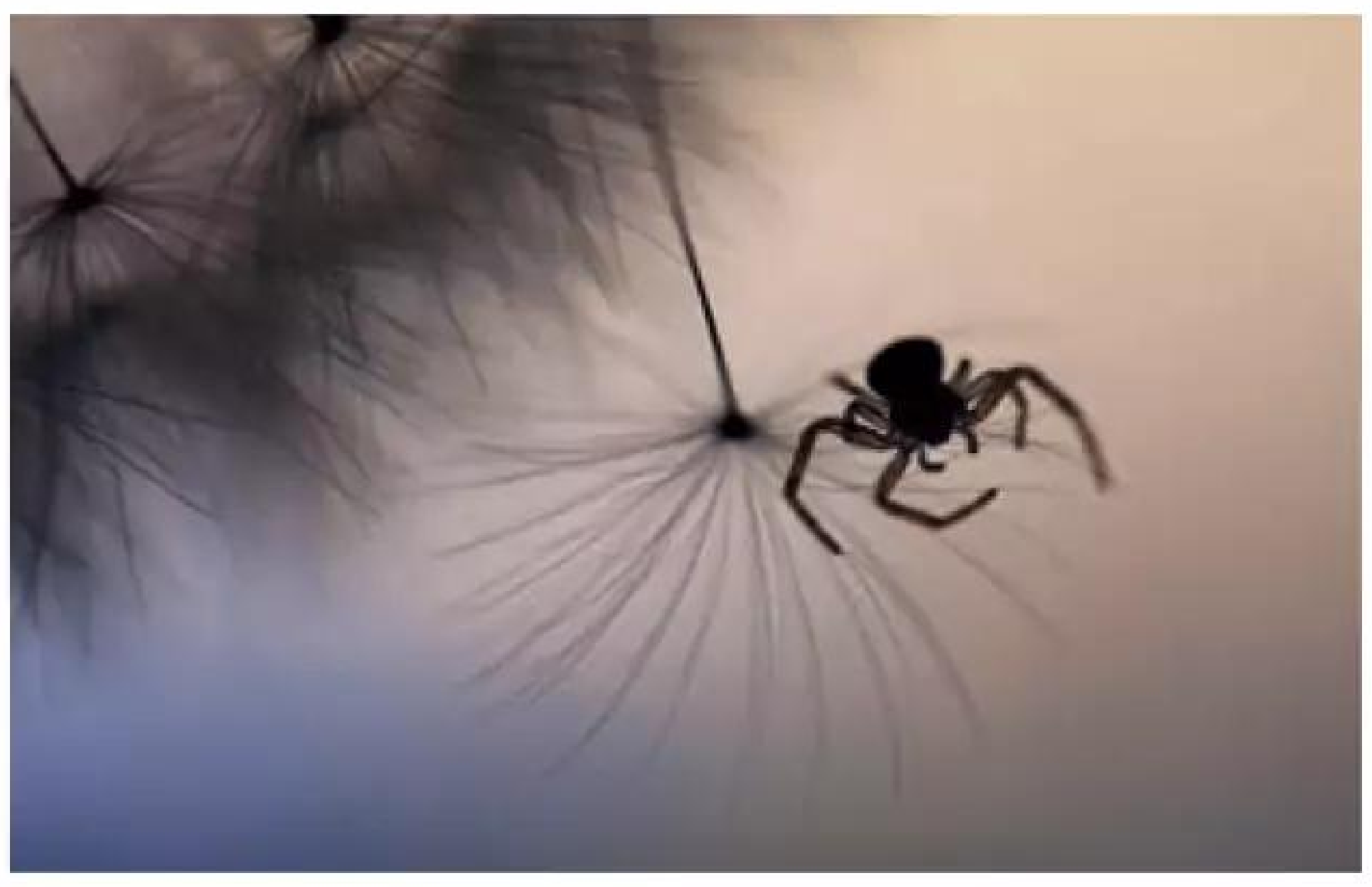


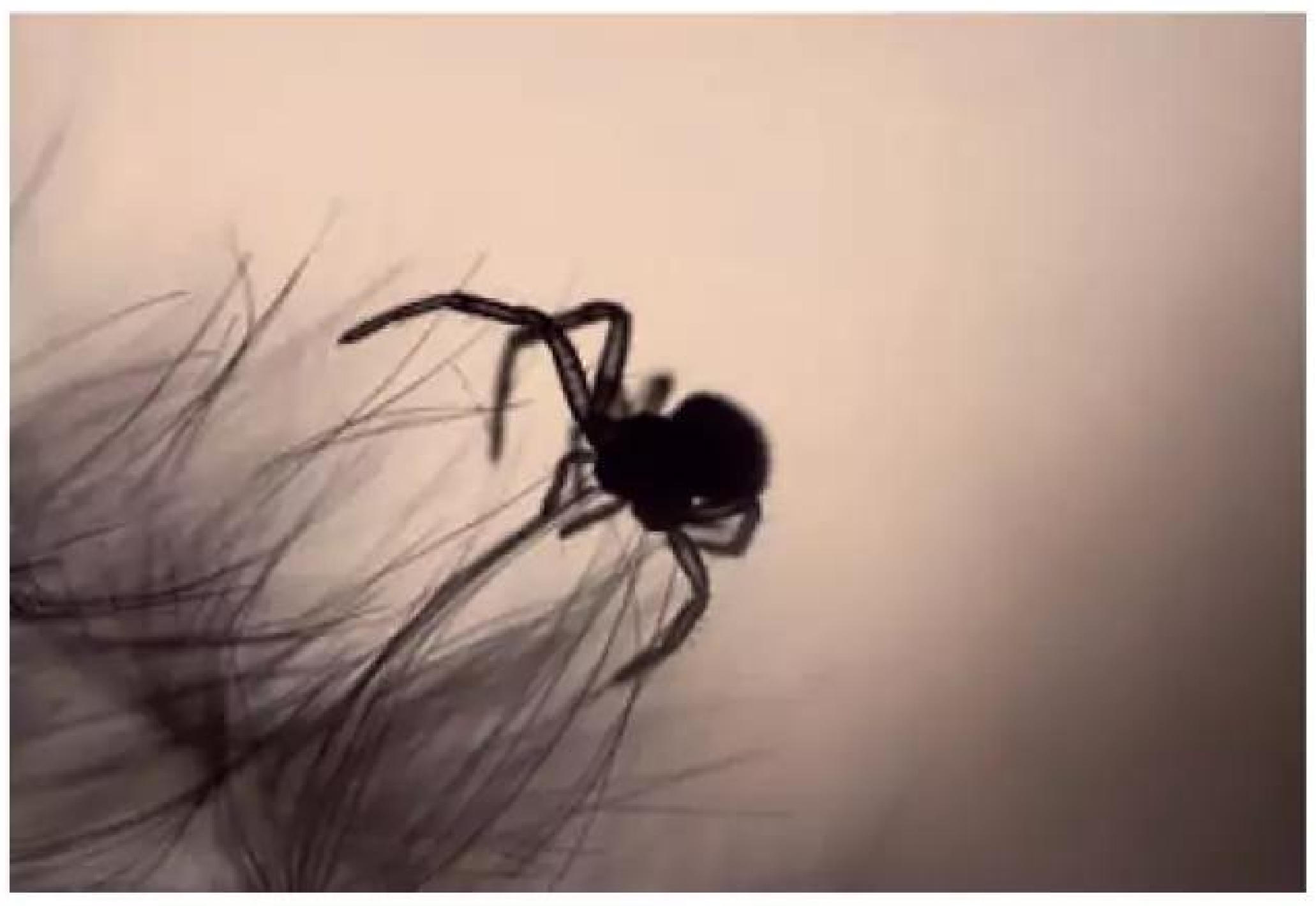
14. DIANNE GALBRAITH

A SPIDER'S JOURNEY



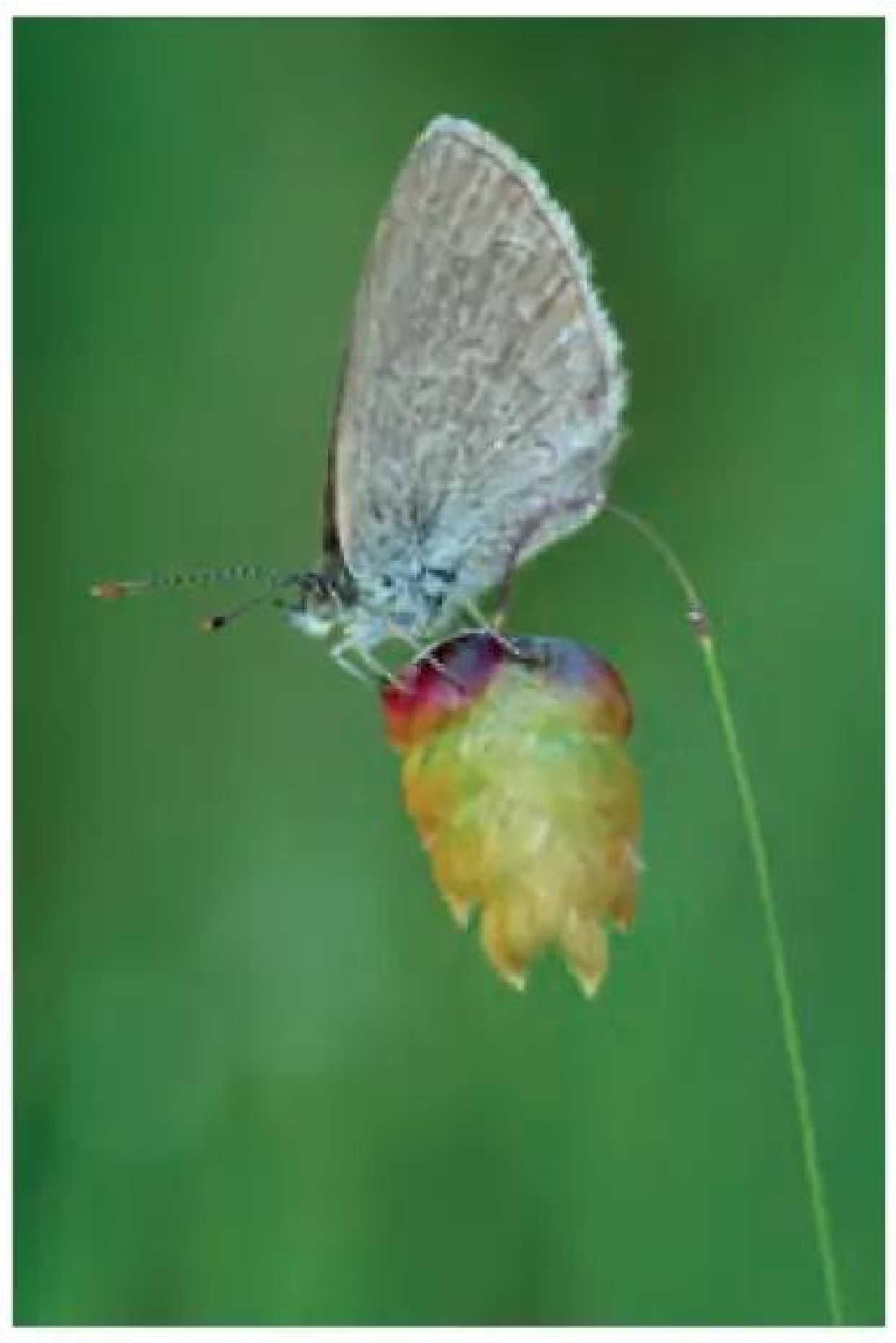


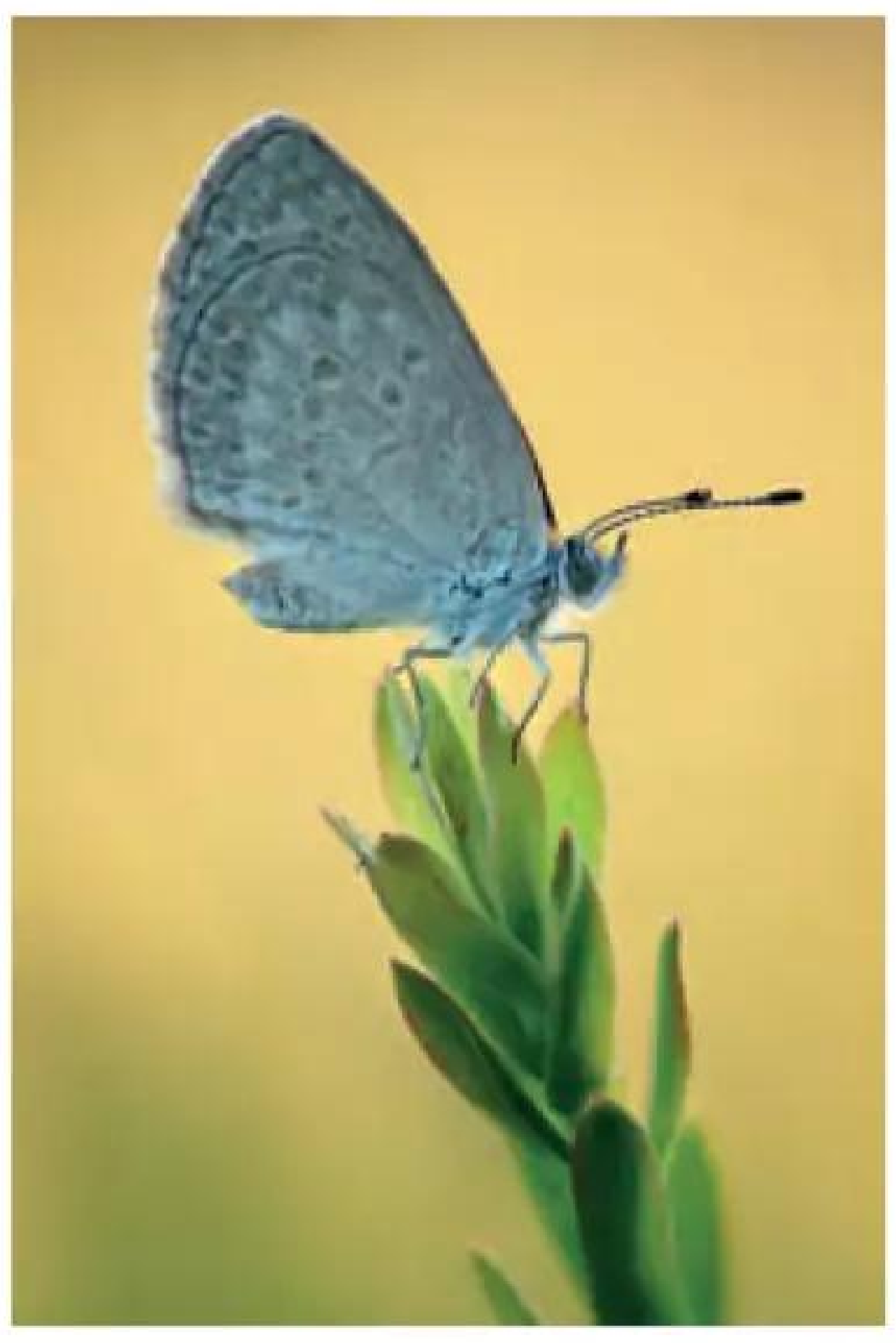


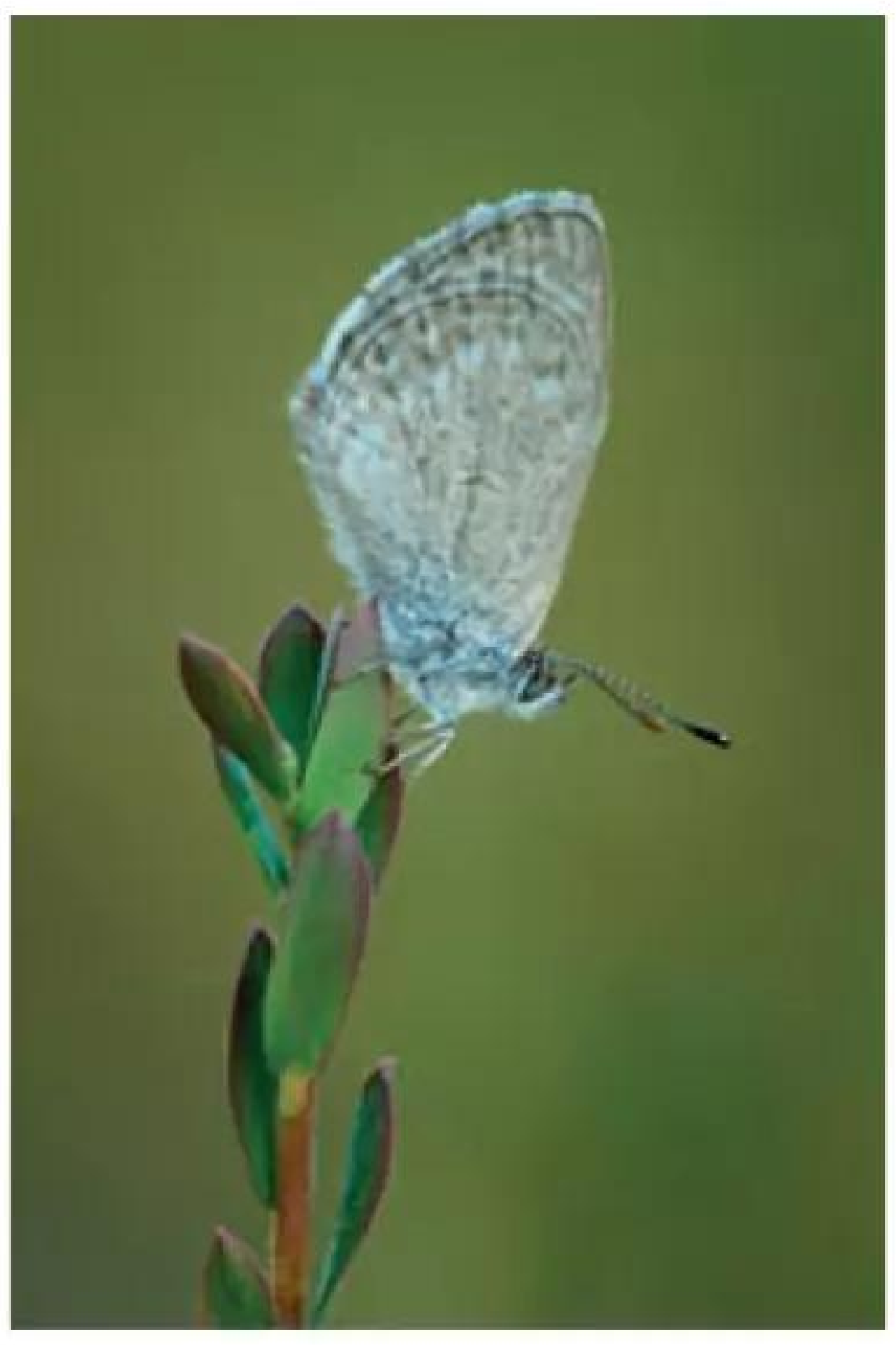


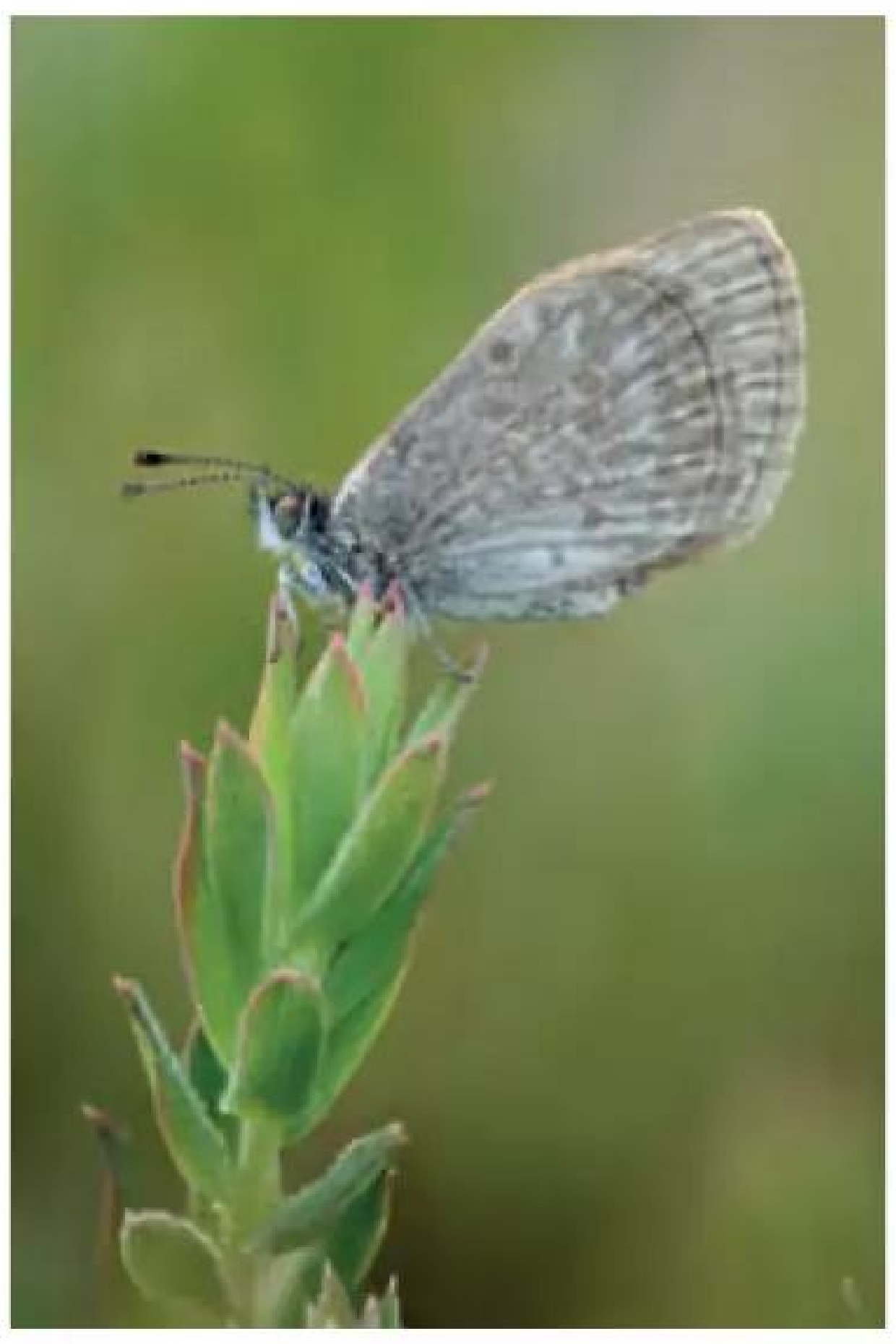
15. GREG WEST

A MORNING WITH COMMON GRASS BLUE BUTTERFLIES



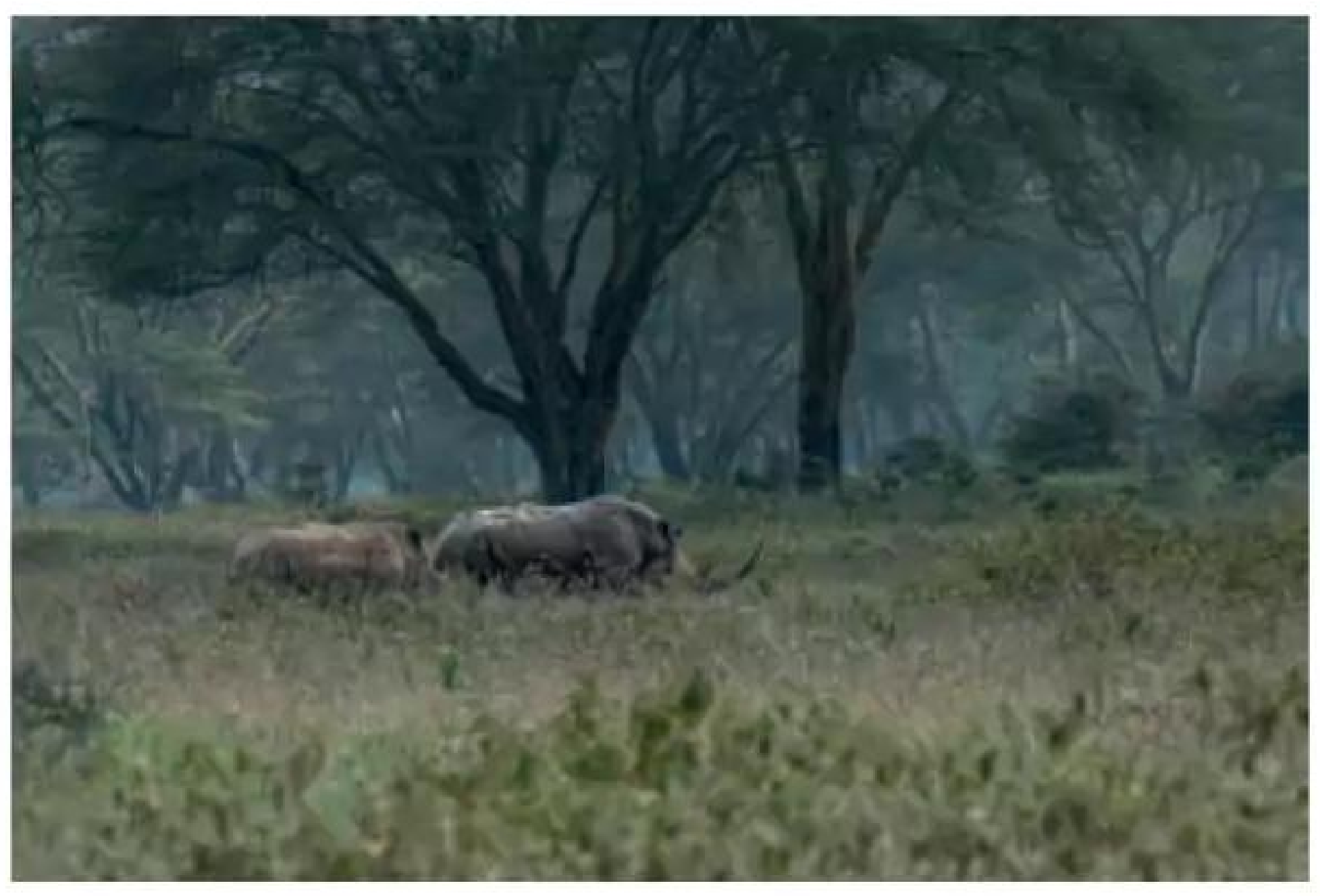


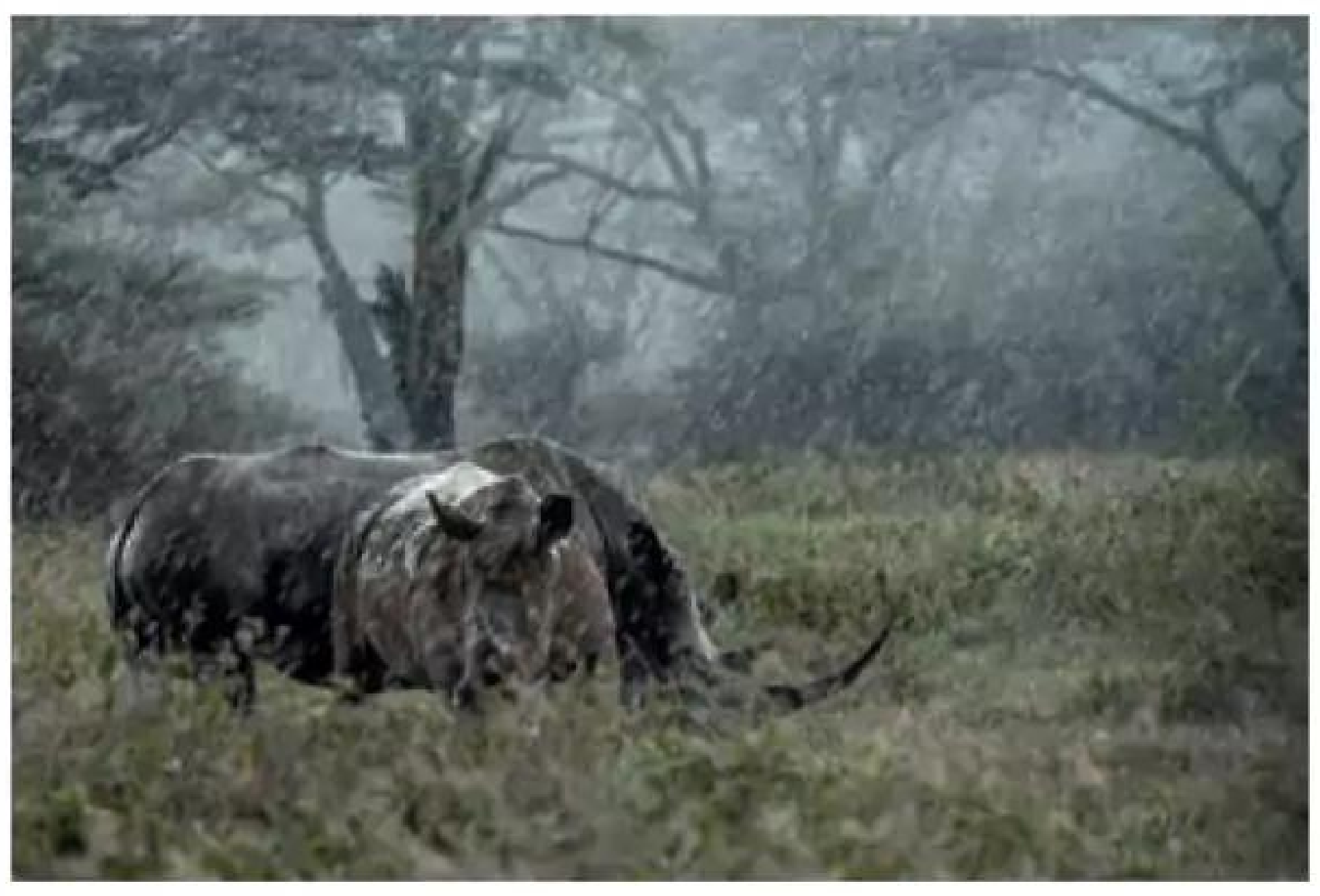


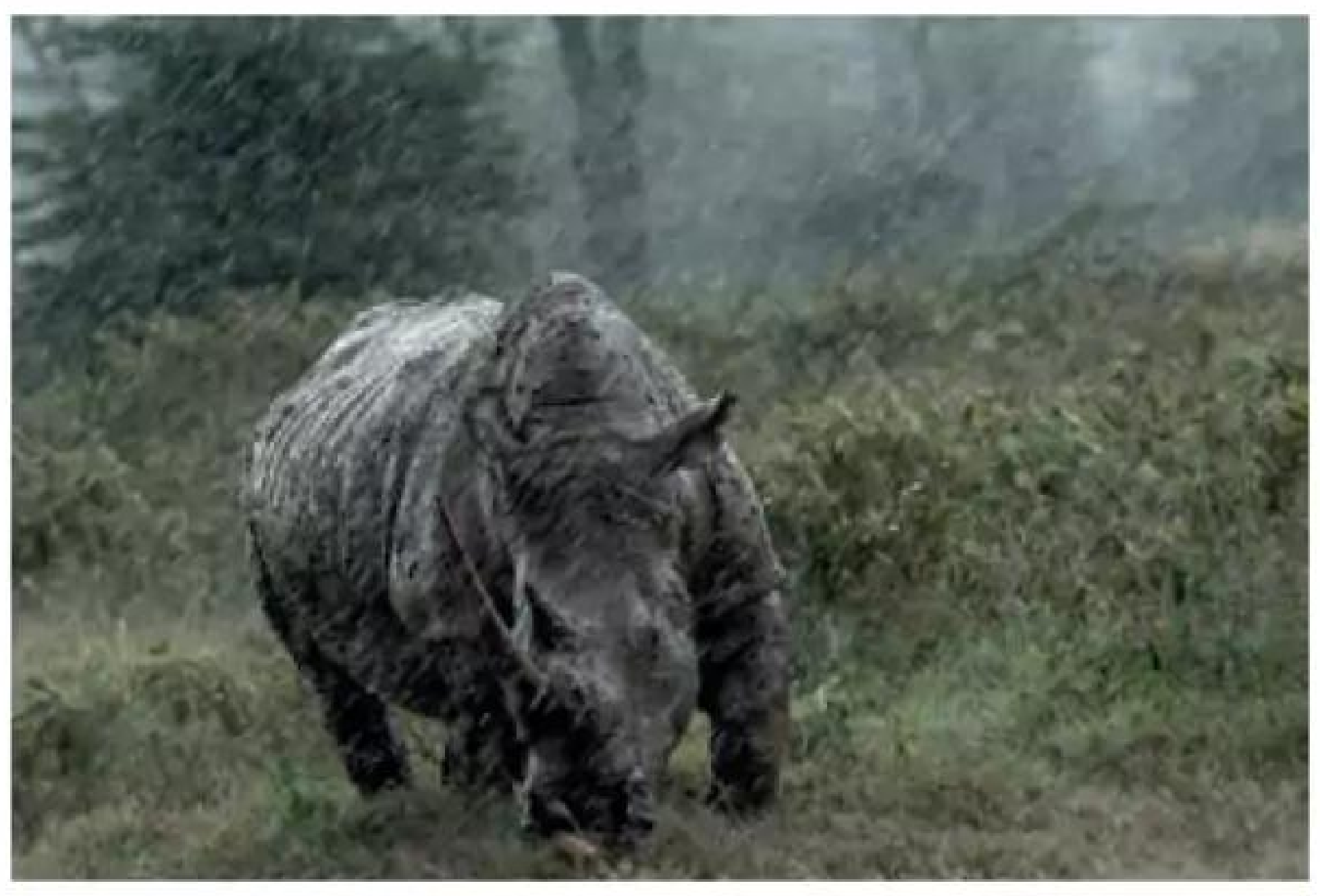


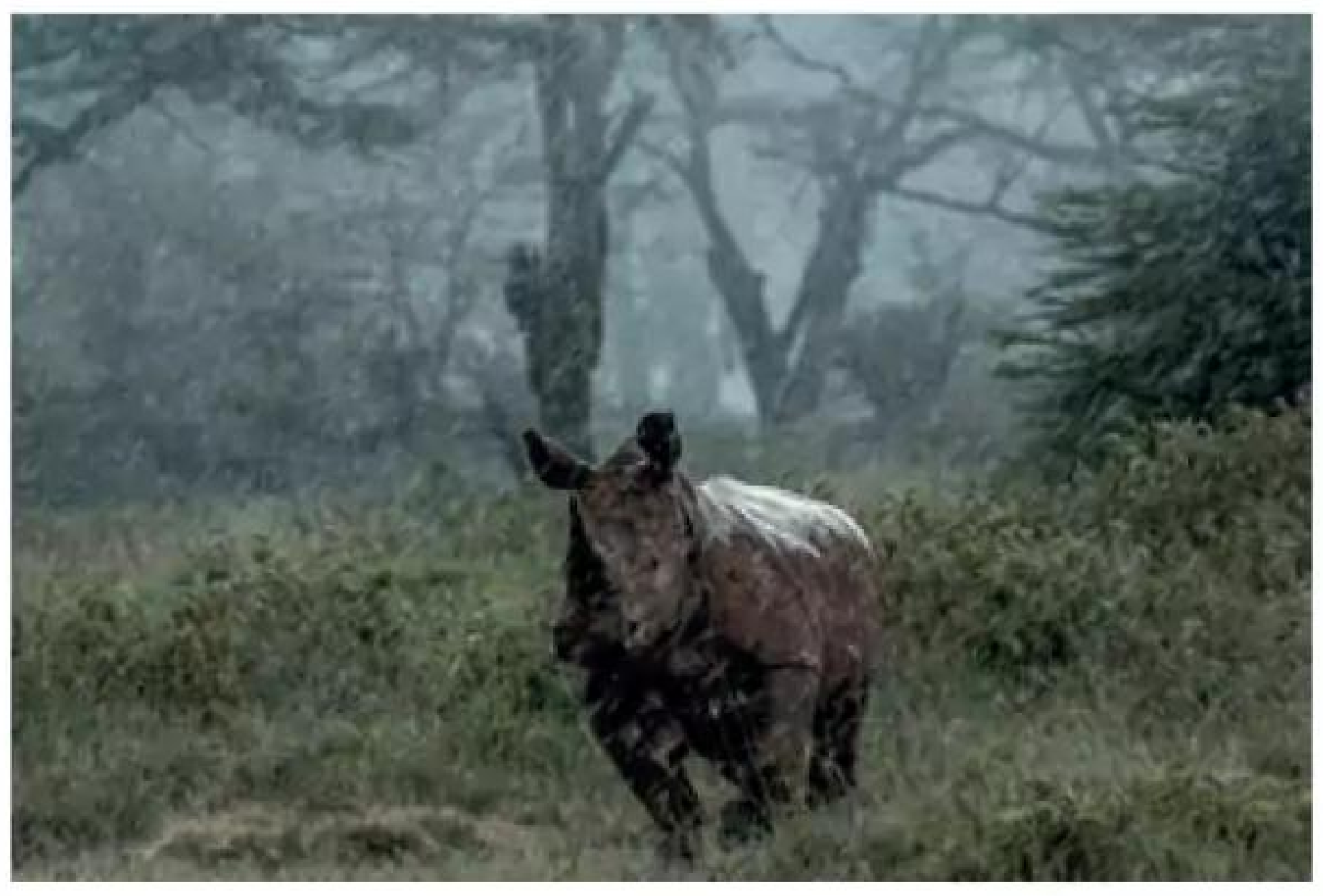
16. JAYATHU AMARASINGHE

HARMONY IN THE RAIN



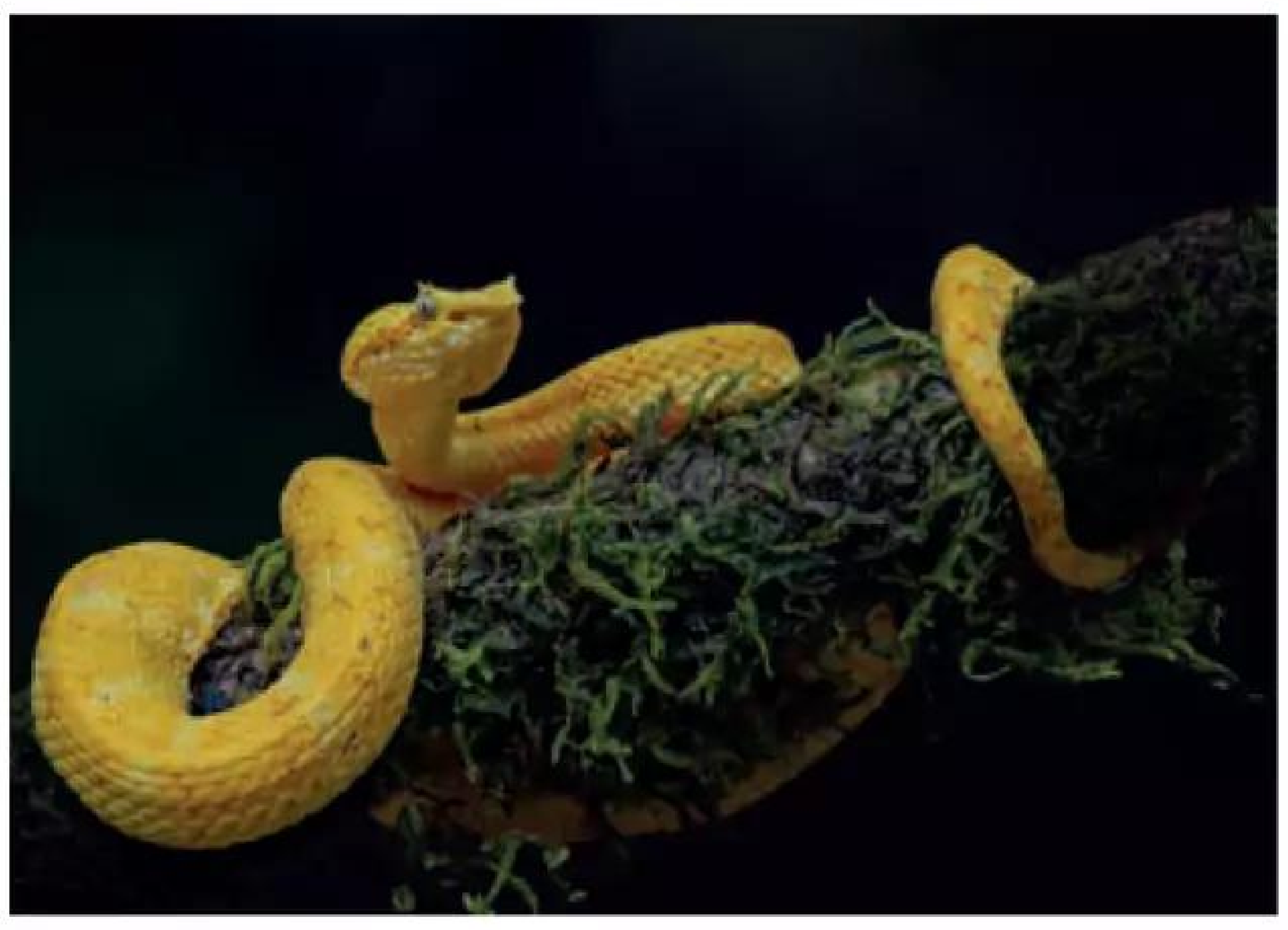


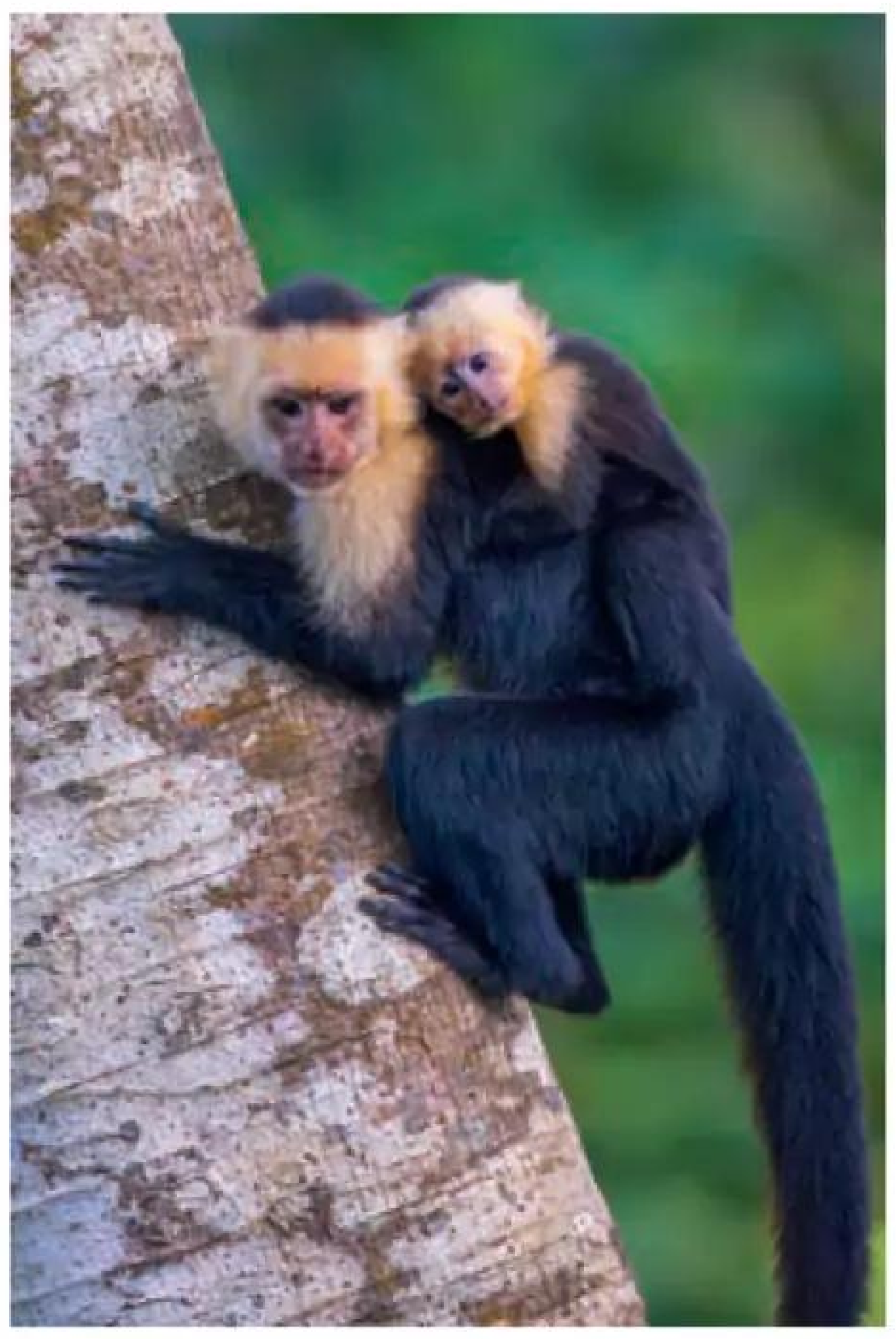


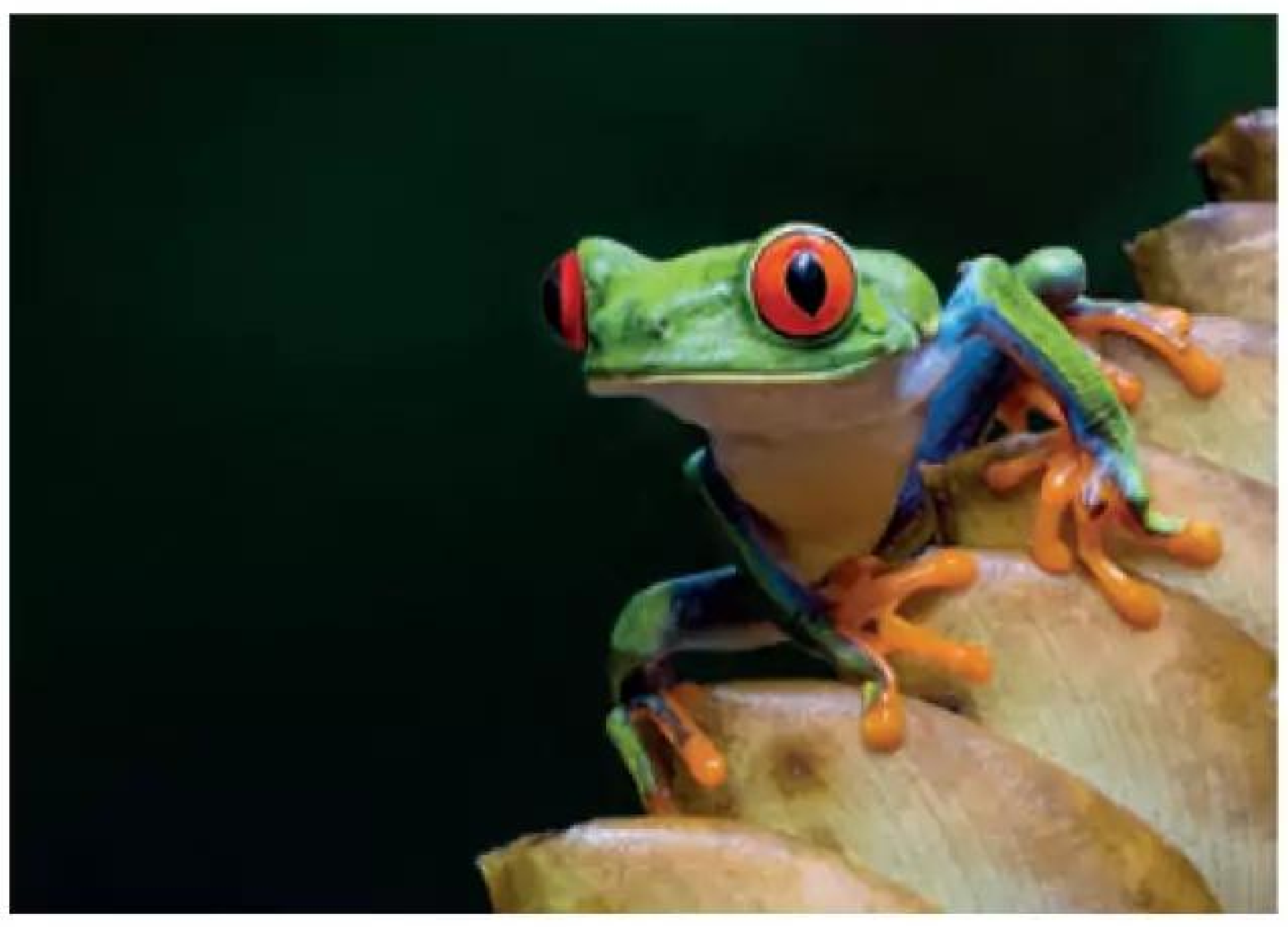


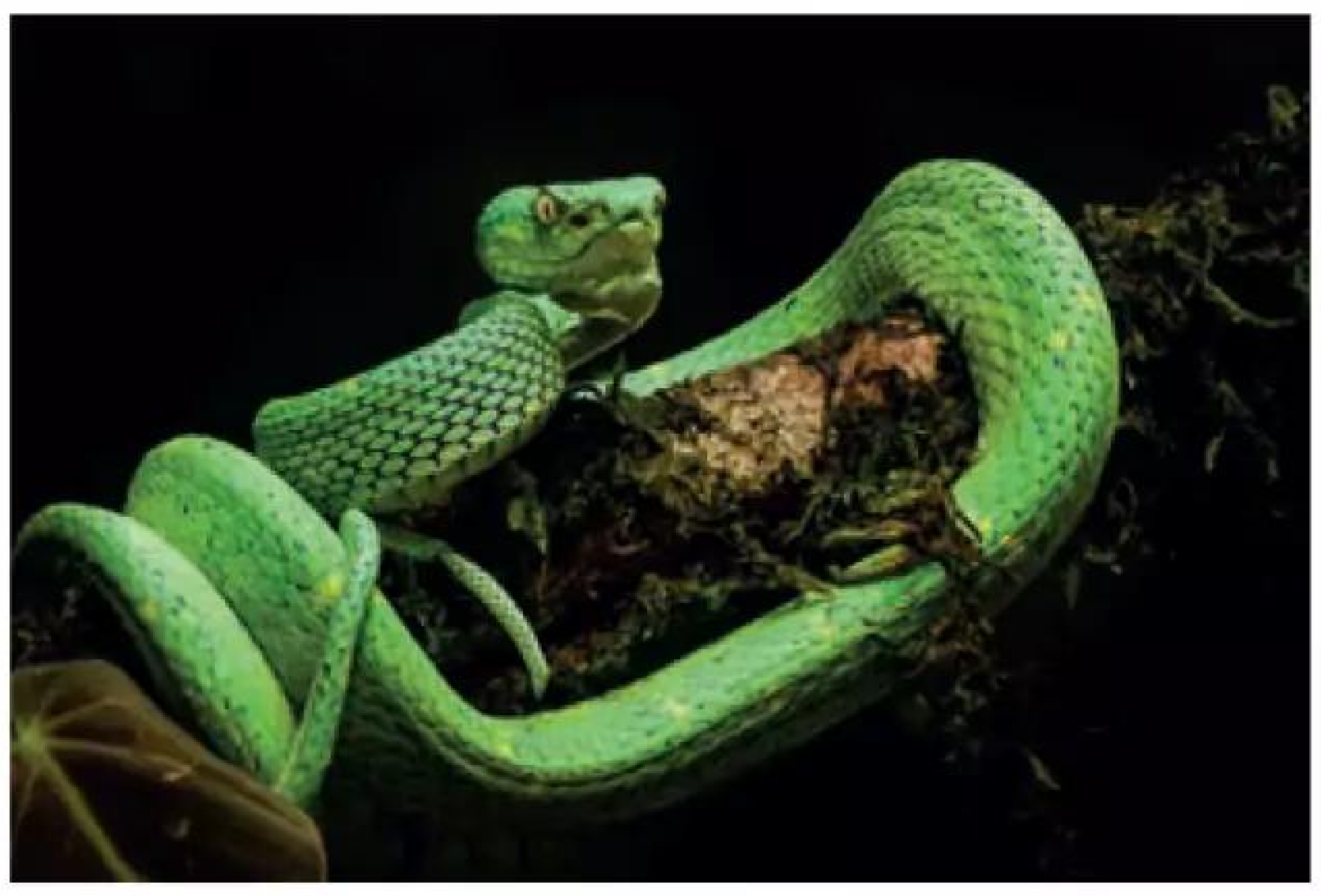
17. ANDREW RAGUSE

COSTA RICA



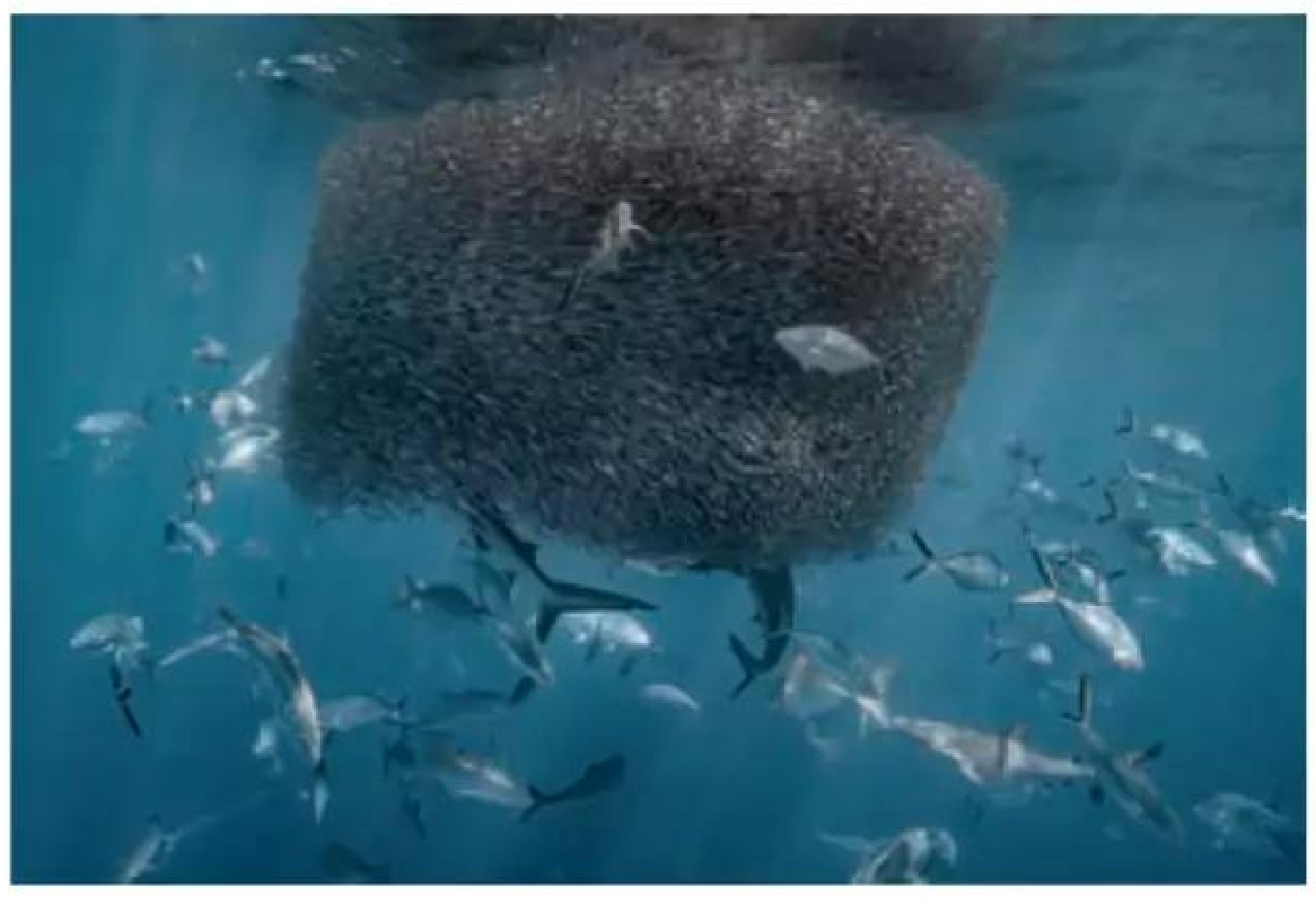


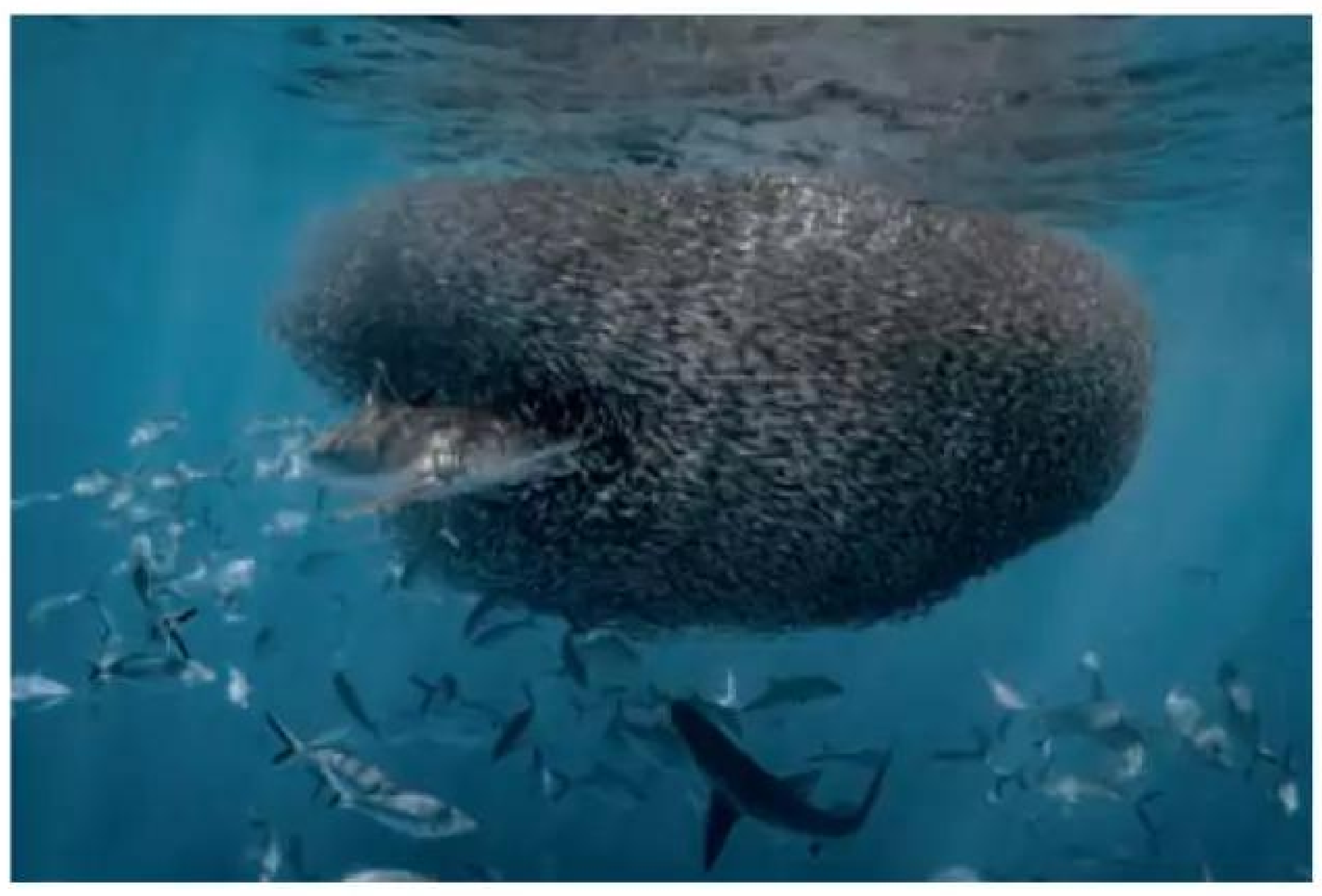


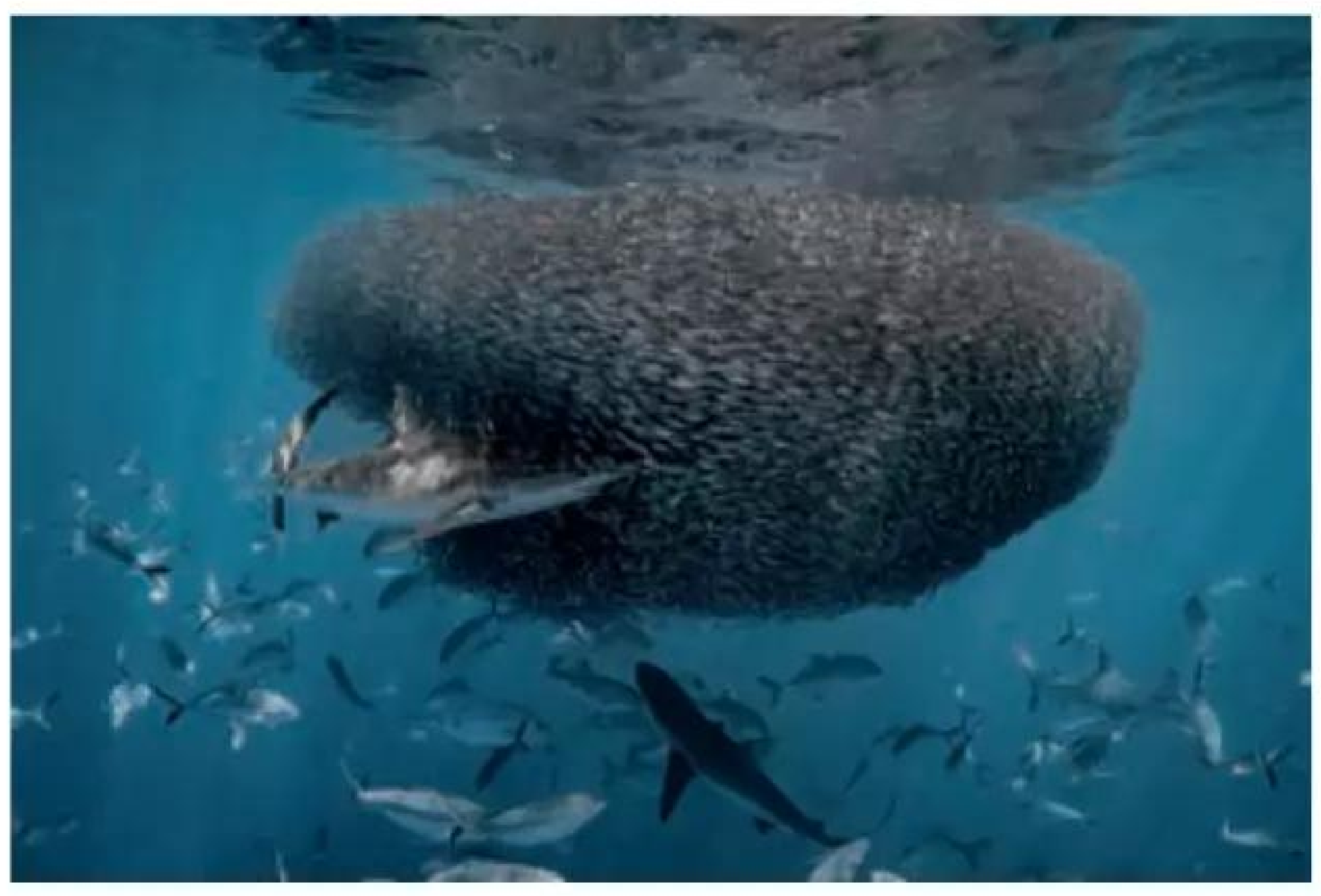


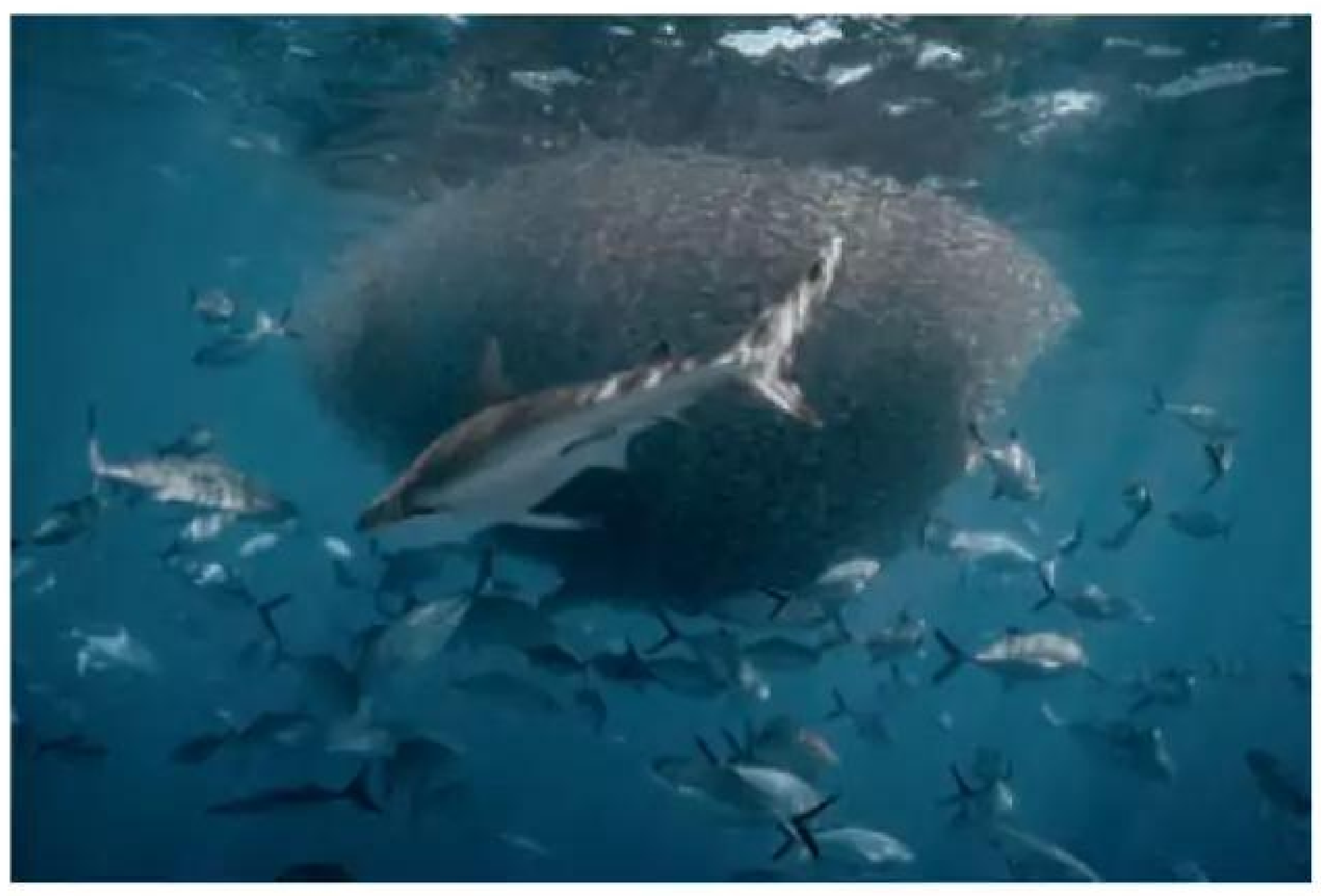
18. LUCIA FITTIPALDI

BUFFET LUNCH: DON'T FORGET YOUR MANNERS



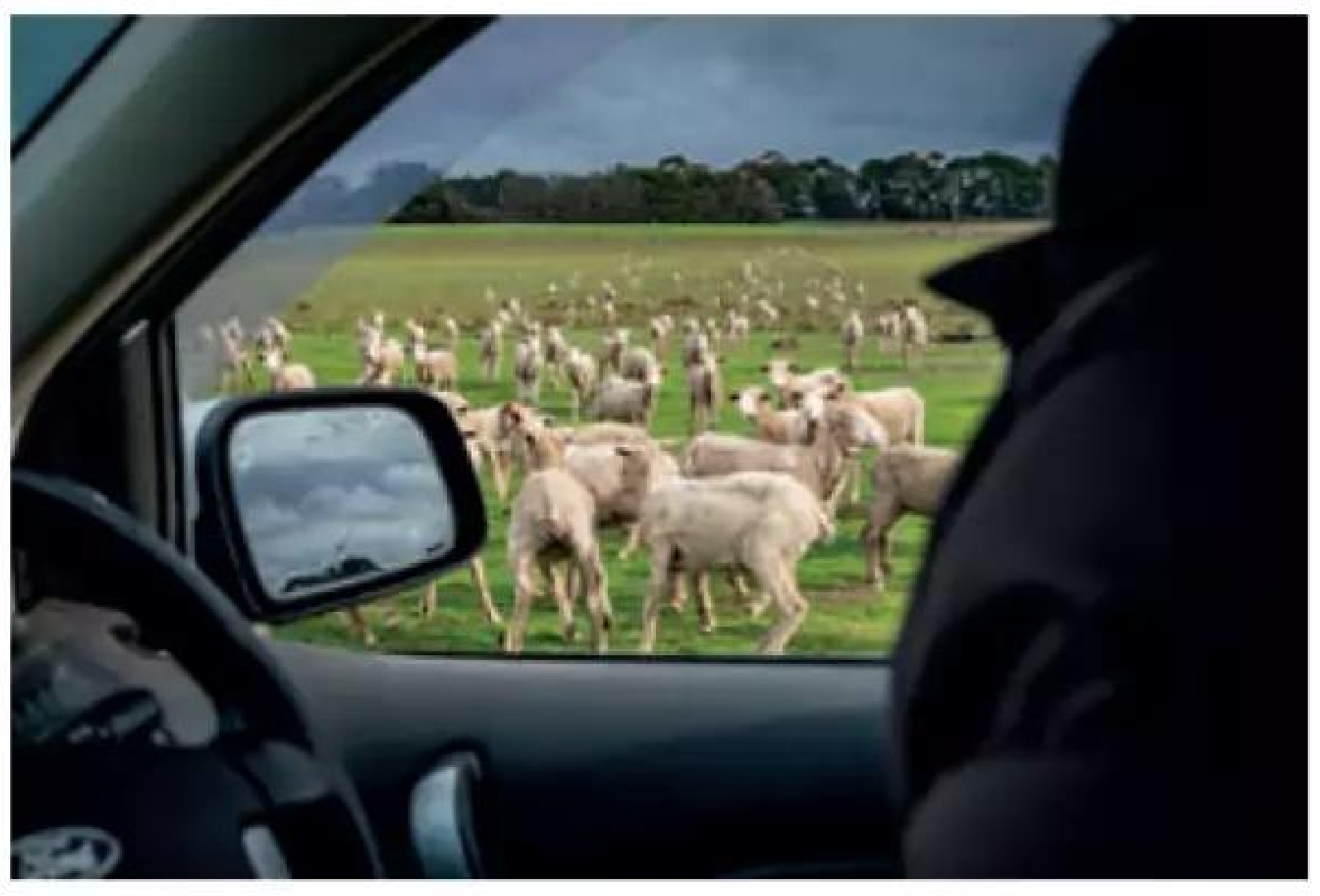


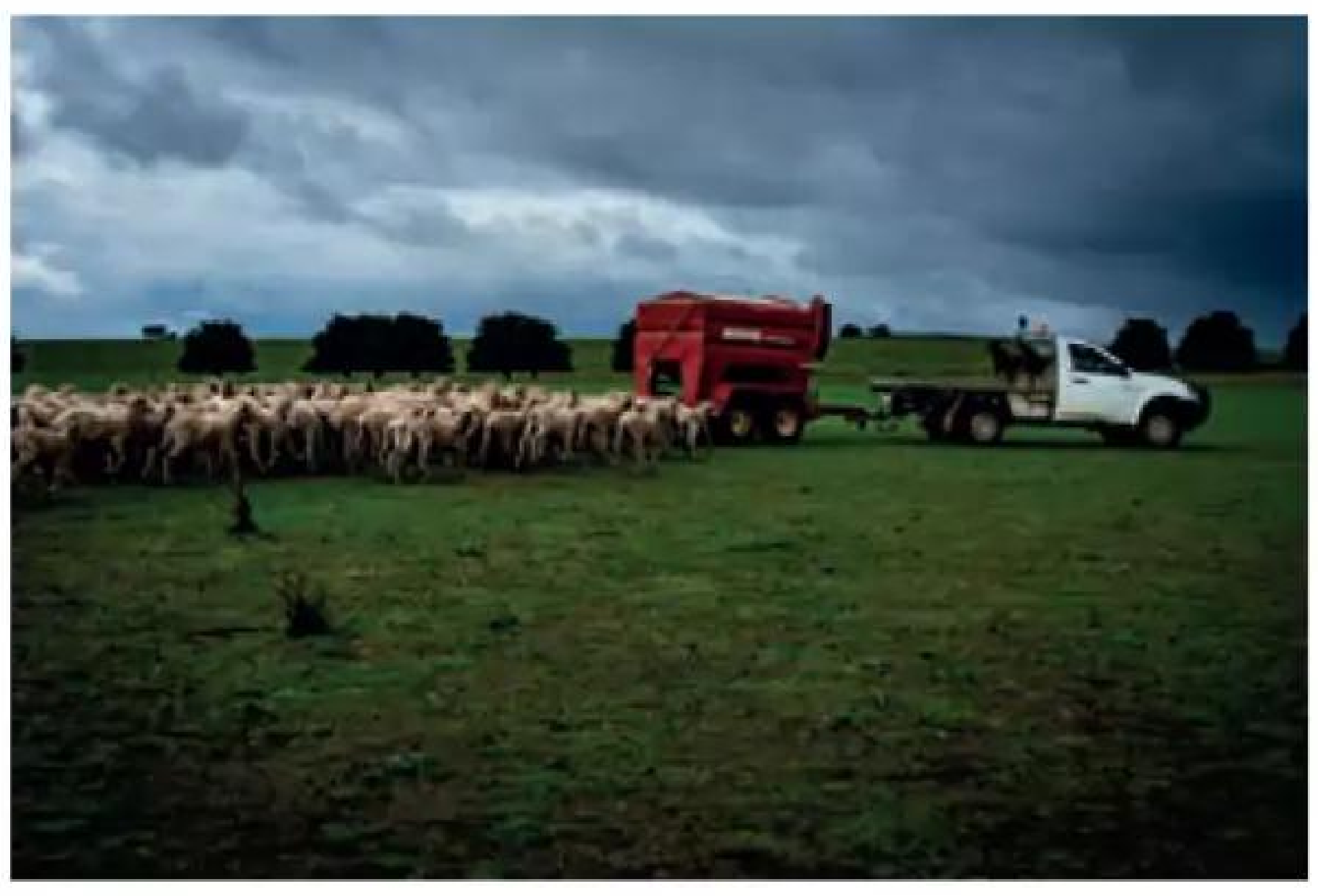


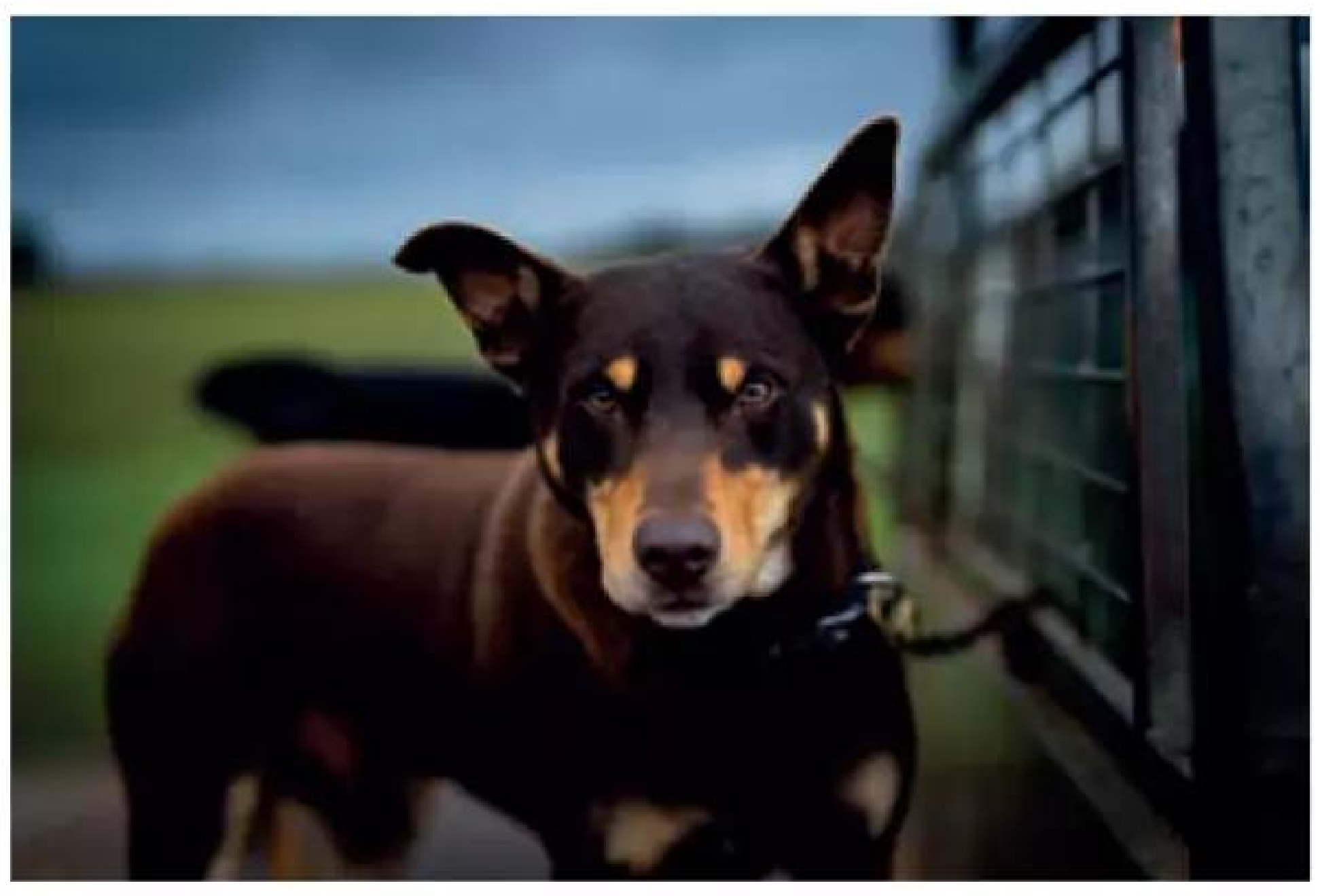


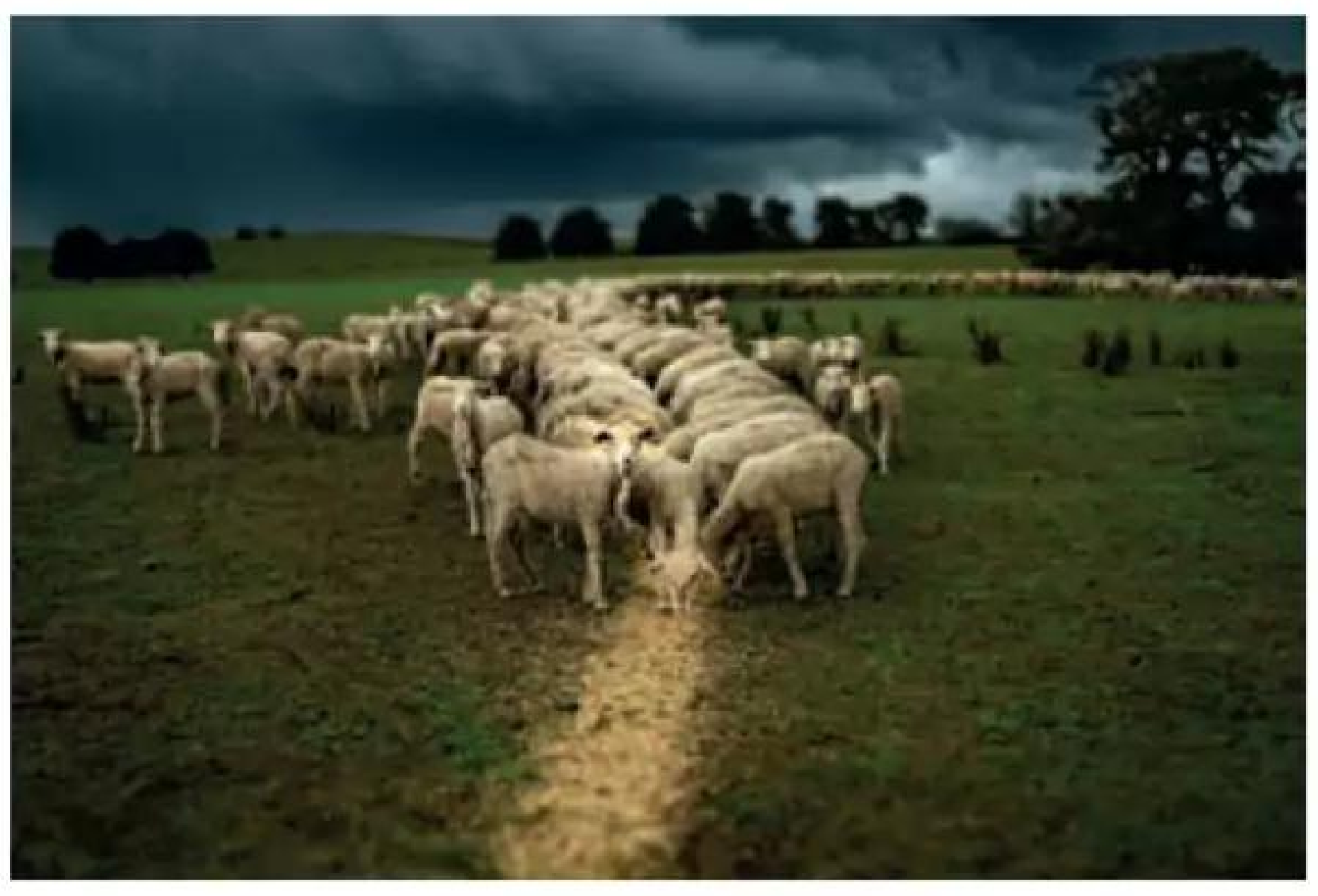
19. NATHAN ACKLAND

ON THE FARM



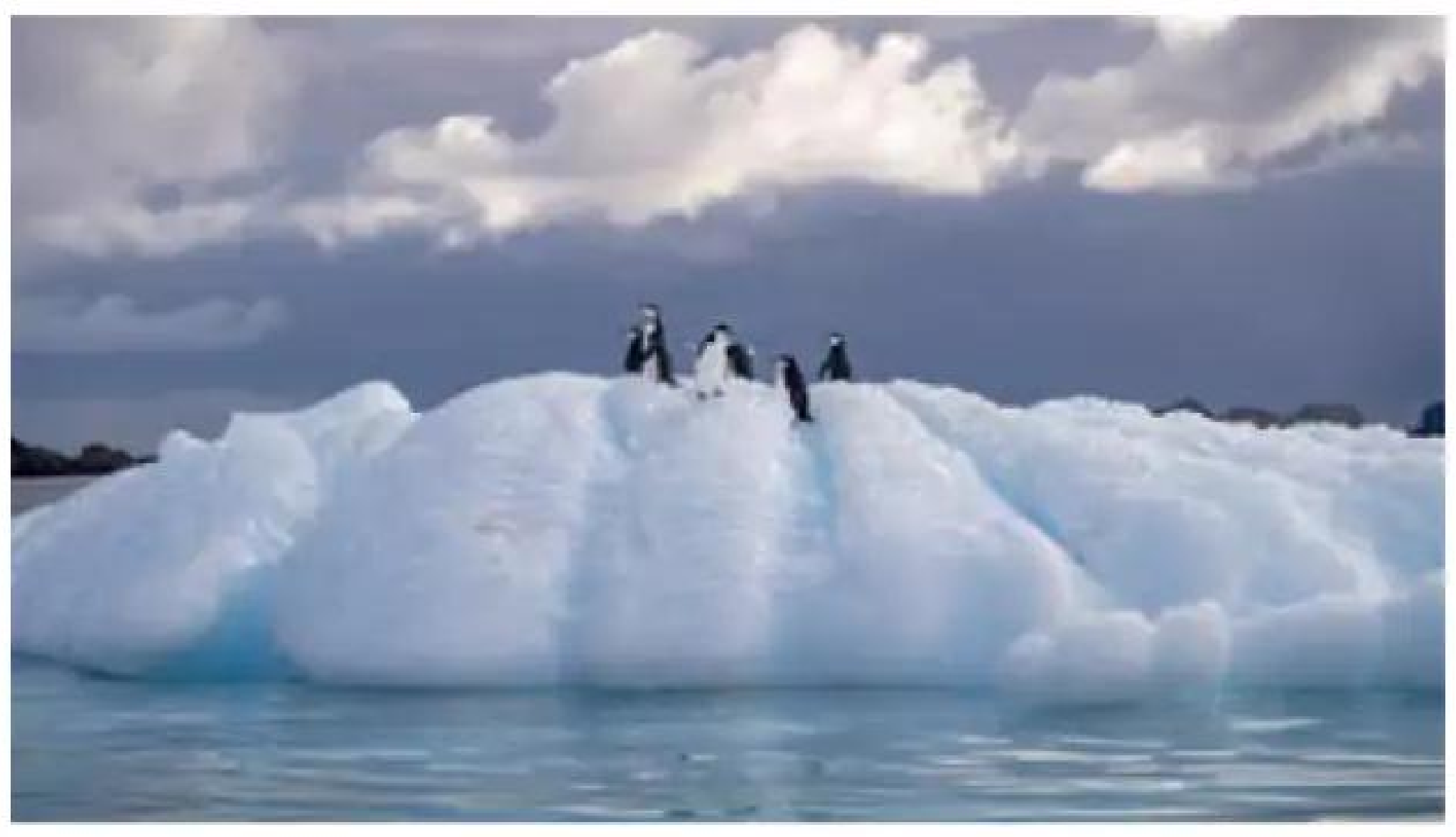


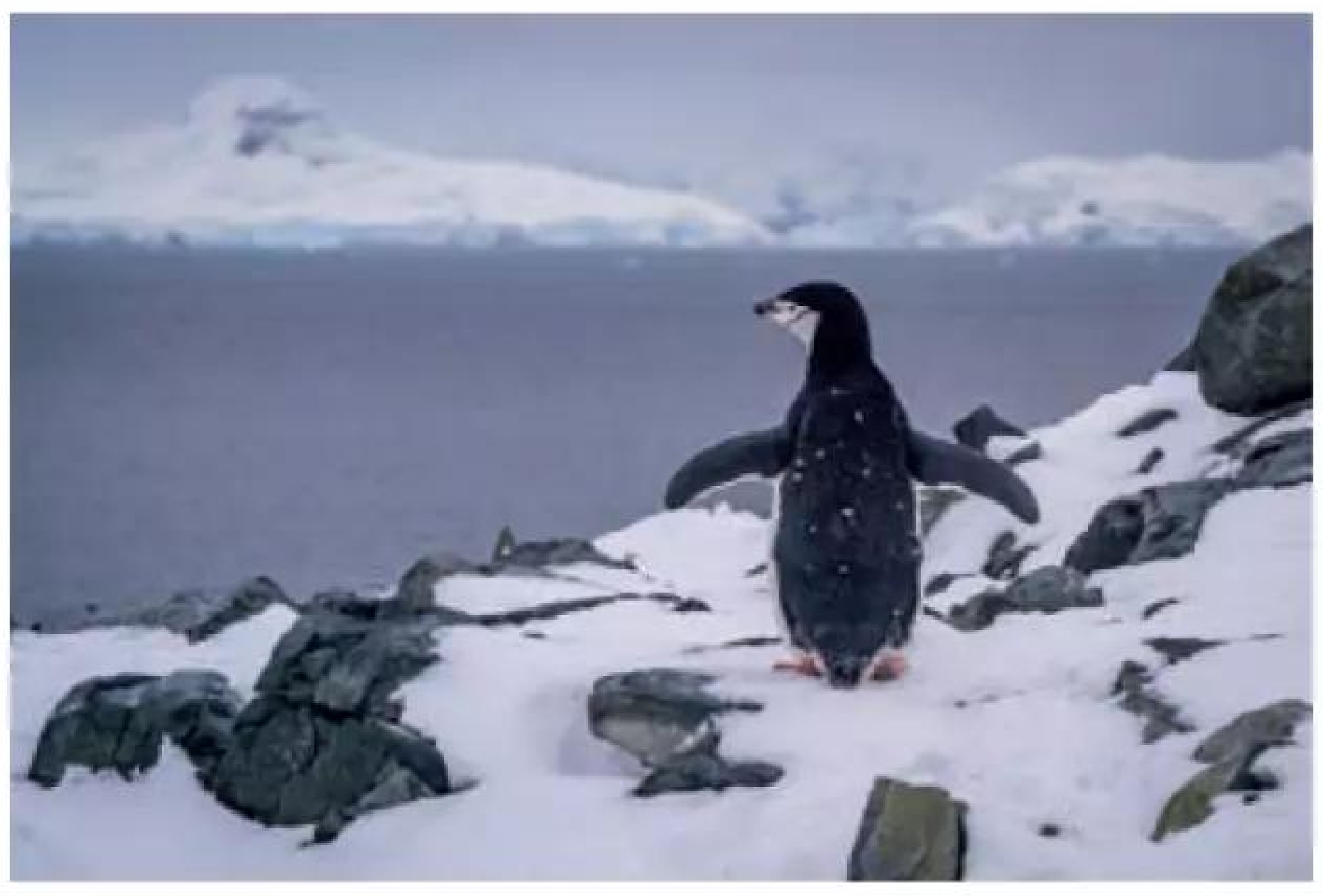


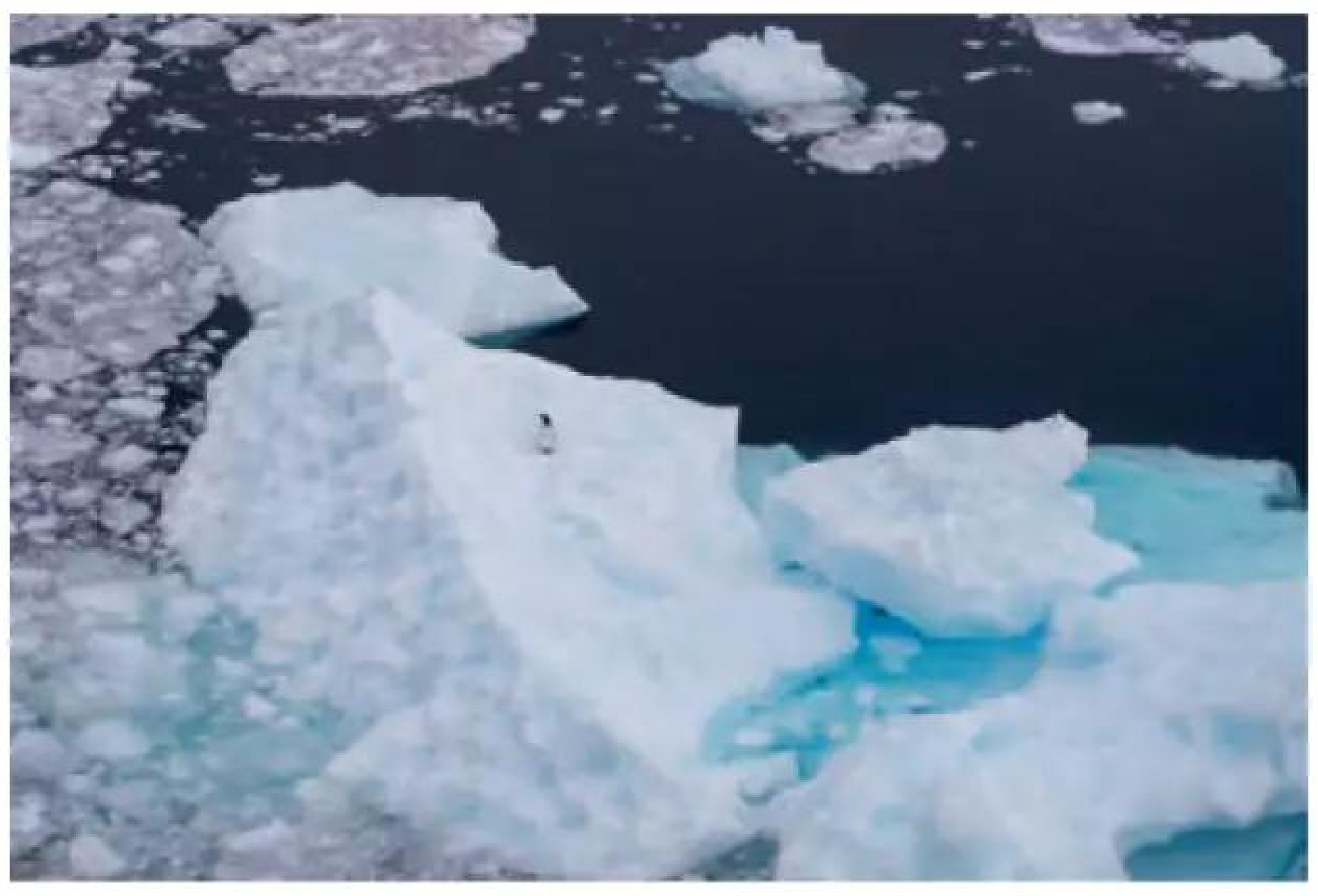


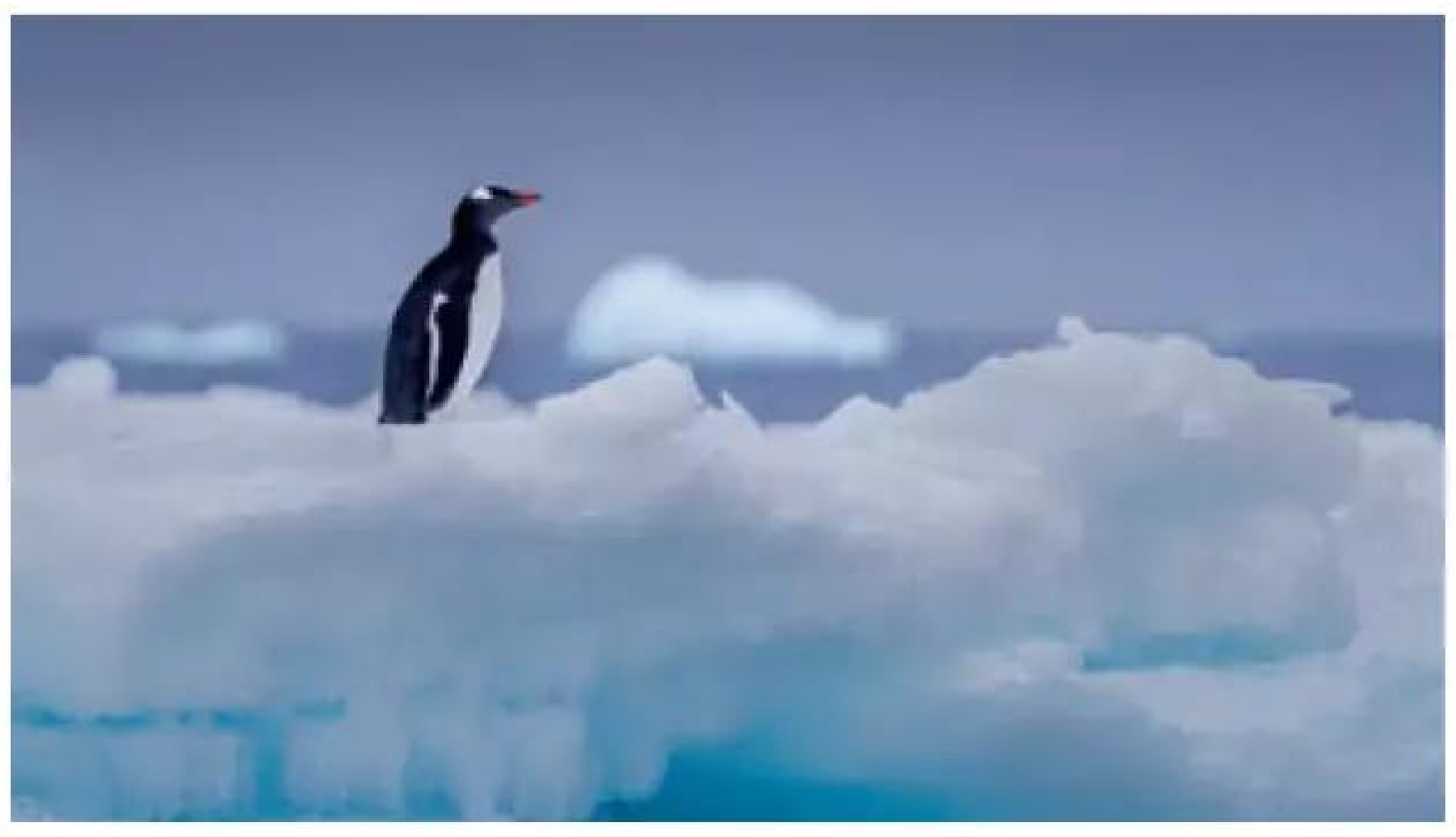
20. ANNETTE KELLY

PENGUINS ON ICE









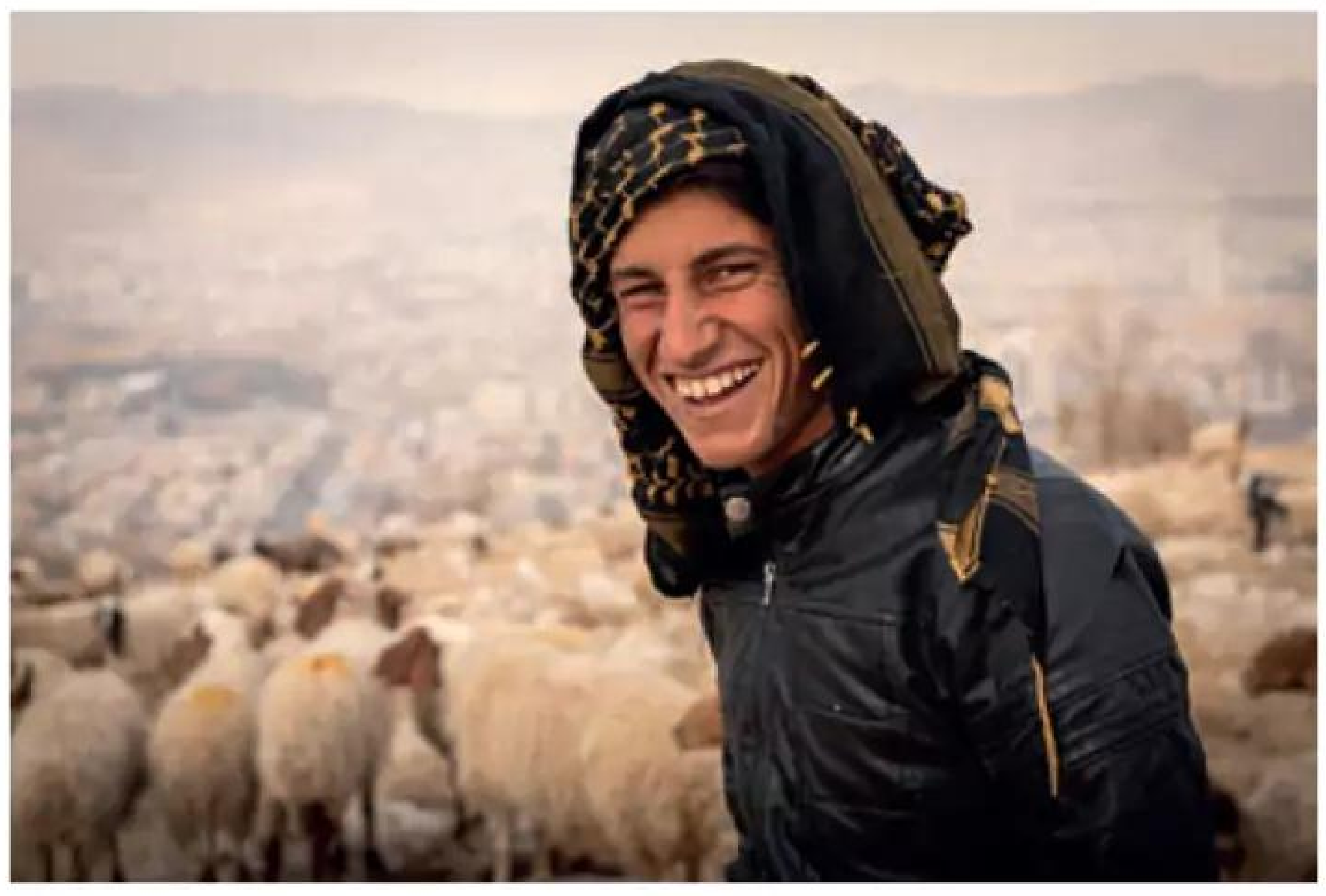
WINNER

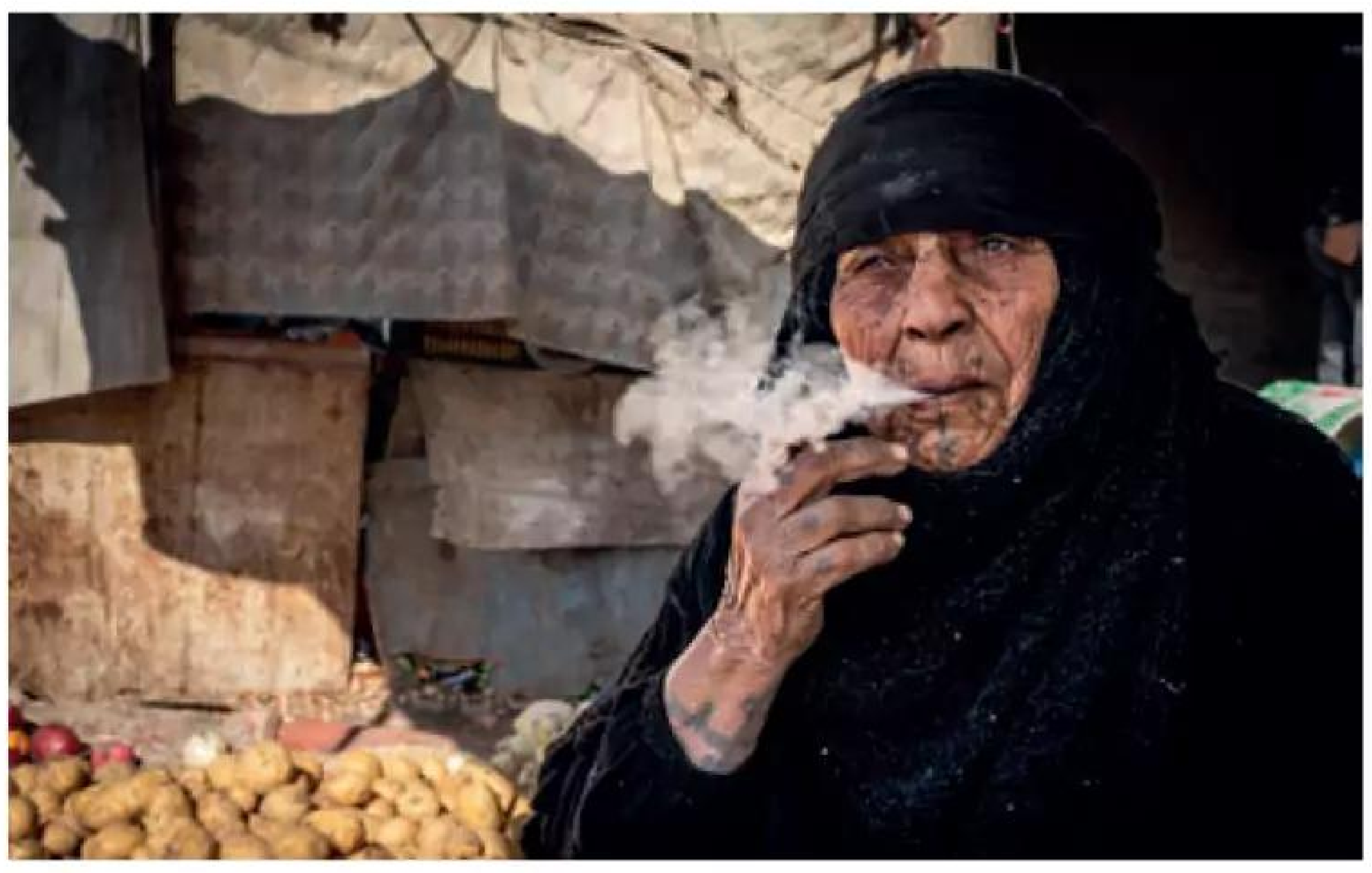
PEOPLE

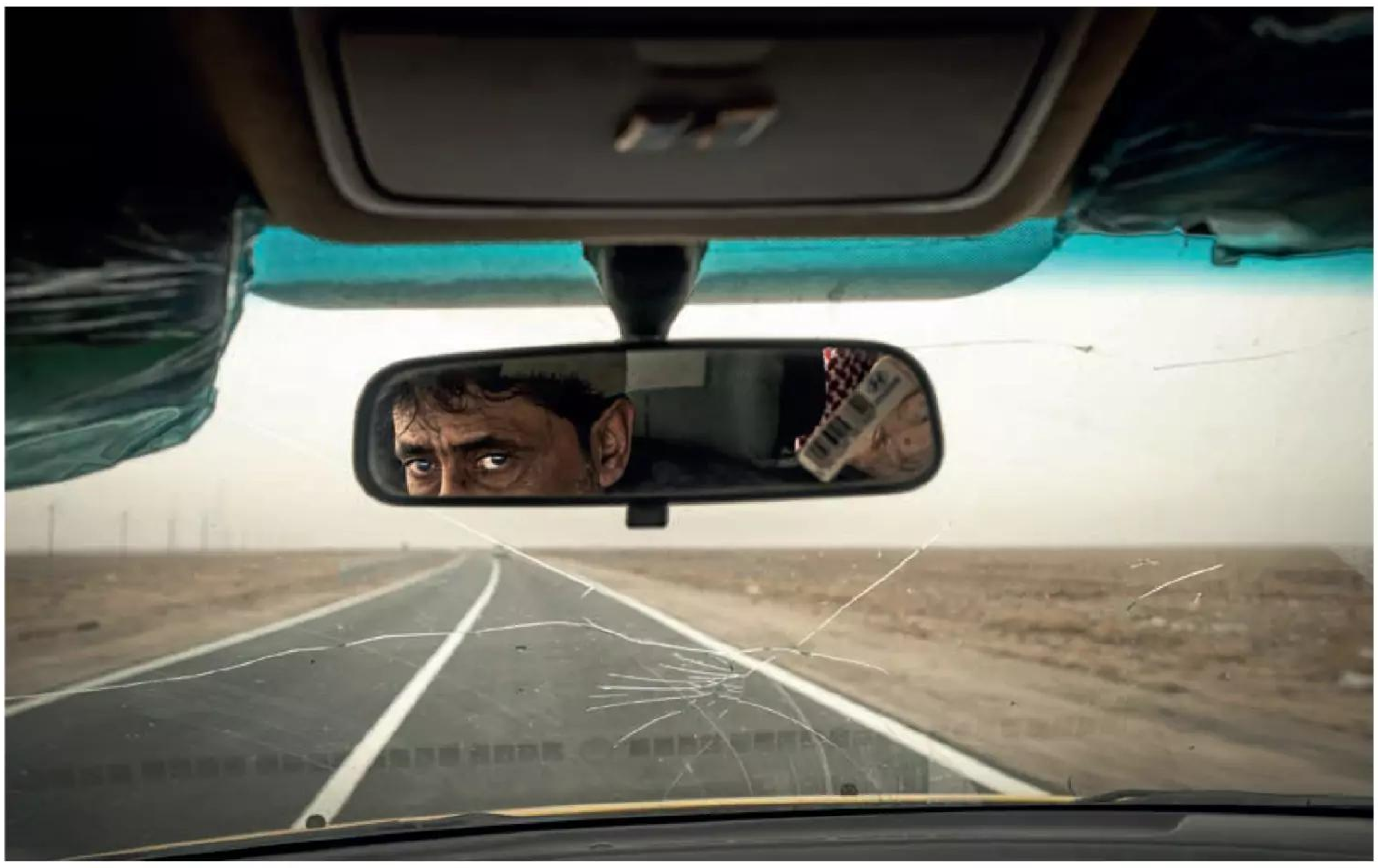
LODI PERTOVT

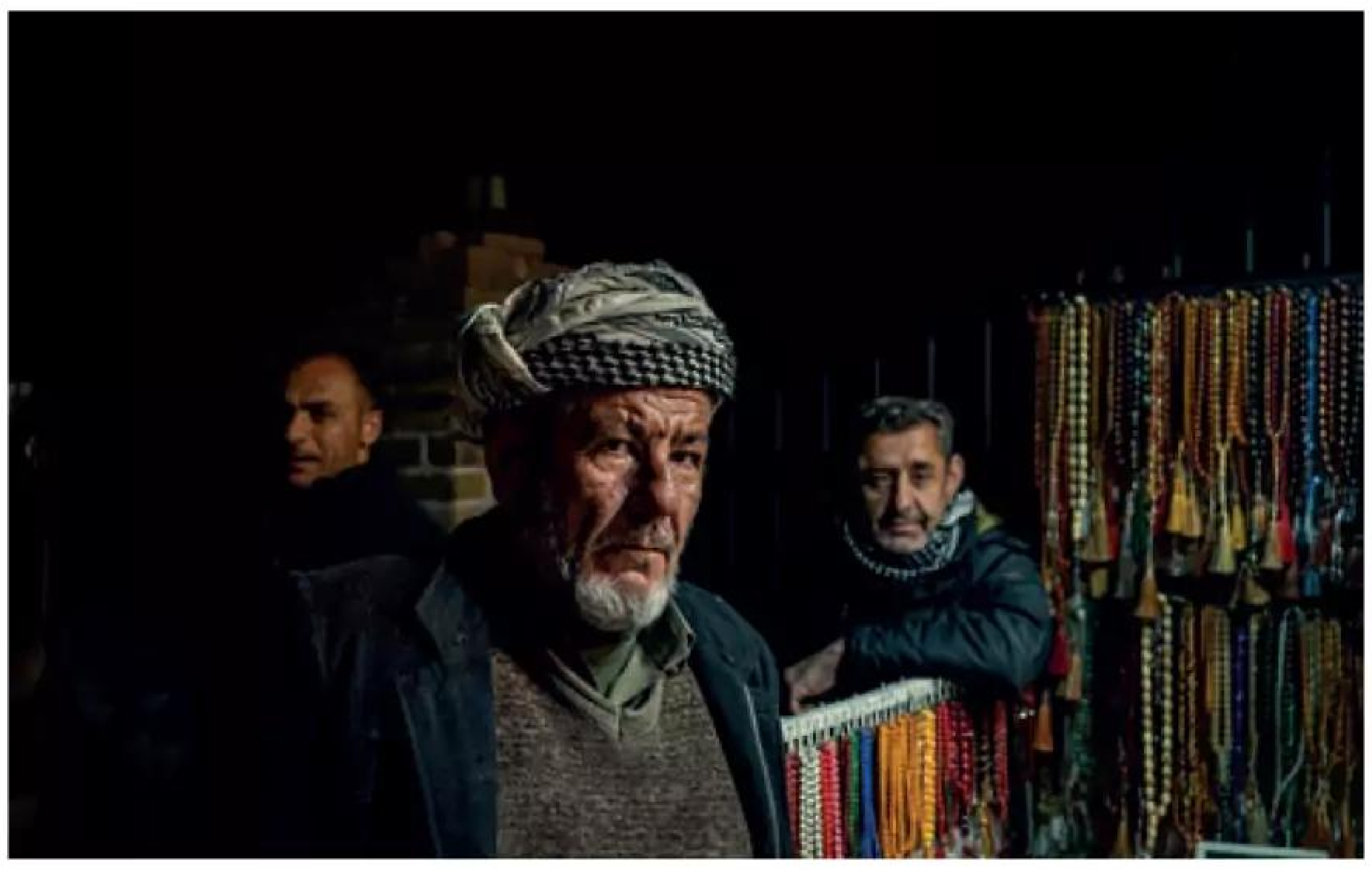
lodipertovtphotography.com

THE FACES OF IRAQ









BASED on the Gold Coast, Lodi Pertovt is a travel and portrait photographer who also teaches English Literature and Social Studies. He describes his powerful People category-winning series *The Faces of Iraq* as deeply personal.

"Each photo captures small but significant details that tell the story of people who risk being forgotten or misunderstood," he says.

"A young Kurdish shepherd atop the mountain ranges of Northern Kurdistan, flashing a kind, almost cheeky grin as I took his photo. A Kurdish merchant in a night market near the city of Halabja, a place that endured one of history's most horrific chemical bombings. A former soldier glancing back in his rear-view mirror, staring in disbelief as I sat in the back of his car. From time to time, he would point to wrecked, desolate buildings and whisper, 'Boom, boom… Da'esh.'

"And, of course, the tattooed woman in a chador, the photo I'm most proud of. Typically, Islamic women are protective of having their photo taken, yet she encouraged me, as if in quiet defiance, despite her chador suggesting she might otherwise be conservative. Then, in what felt like a final act of rebellion, she lit a cigarette, an act typically reserved for Iraqi men."

For our judges, Pertovt's emotive portraits, with their wonderful diversity of subjects, were a standout in this most challenging category.

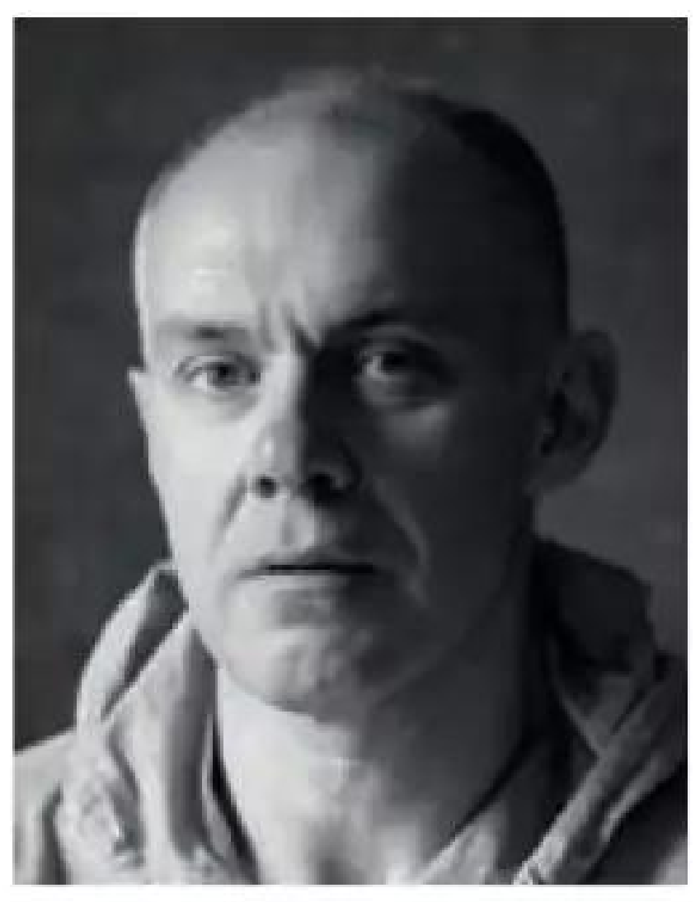
WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

HELEN WHITTLE: Lodi has captured an authentic and powerful connection with his subjects, revealing real moments from their lives. Each image is compelling, enriched by intricate backgrounds that deepen the emotional impact. With a remarkable sensitivity and insight, these portraits feel both intimate and respectful. The interesting compositions and thoughtfully chosen settings add layers, allowing each story to unfold naturally.

MANDARINE MONTGOMERY: A cohesive and strong view of a fascinating and diverse culture. Lodi has superbly drawn out the emotion in each subject while creating a clever visual narrative. Subtle earthy tones with colour pops along the way dance with increasing subject intensity – from joy to menace – with clues left at each turn to prompt the story. A well-crafted visual dialogue told through the eyes of the subjects.

PRIZE: $1000 cash and a Sigma lens from Ted's Cameras valued at $2,000, a Photobookshop HD layflat photobook valued at $289, plus, three Retouch4Me photo retouching apps.

RUNNER-UP
PEOPLE



BRETT FERGUSON

@brettfergusonphotography

THE PERFORMER IN RED

NO stranger to Photographer of the Year, Brett Ferguson was a category winner in the competition in 2018. Since then, he has continued to develop as a photographer, further refining his interest in off-camera lighting and his now characteristic collaborative portraiture.

His runner-up series in 2025, created with model Evana De Lune, explores the contrast between two sides of a single identity. One is the burlesque performer, always impeccably dressed, full of confidence, and captivating the audience with a magnetic stage presence.

“This persona is vibrant, expressive, and perpetually ‘on’, embodying the glamour and theatricality that the art form demands,” he says.

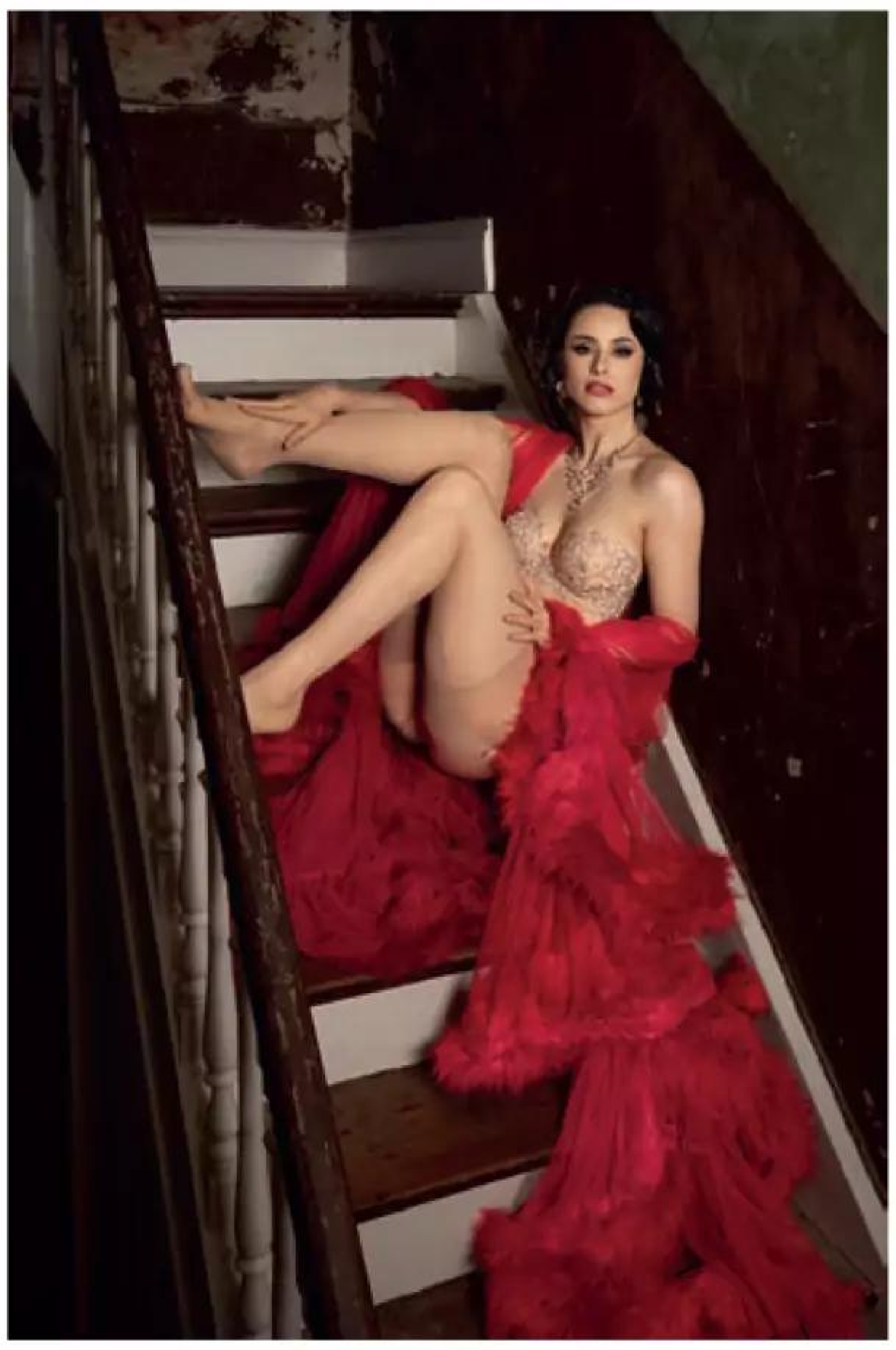
The other is the private individual who, away from the spotlight, finds comfort in quiet moments and solitude.

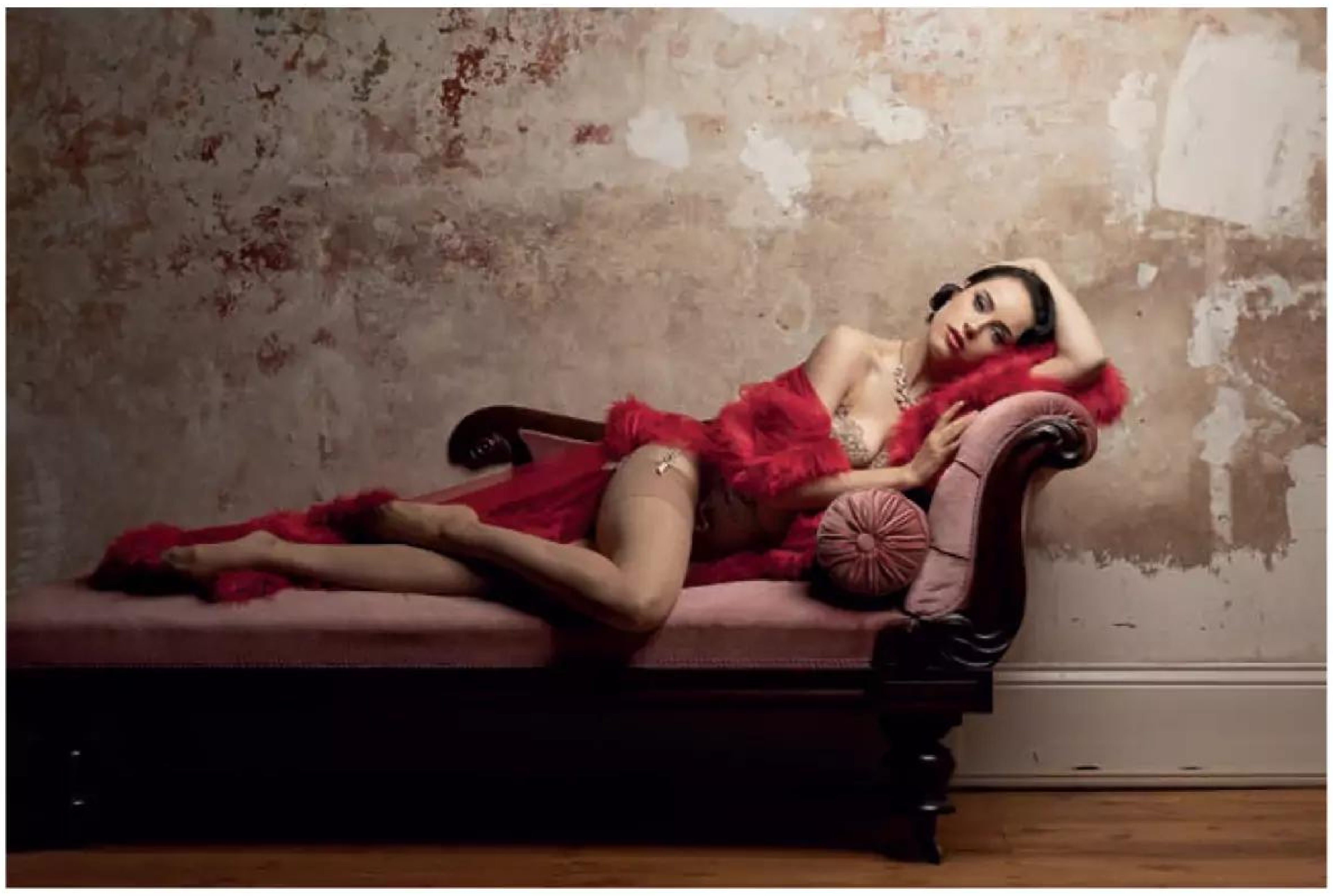
For our judges, the series wowed with its delicate control of light and emotion, along with its technical excellence.

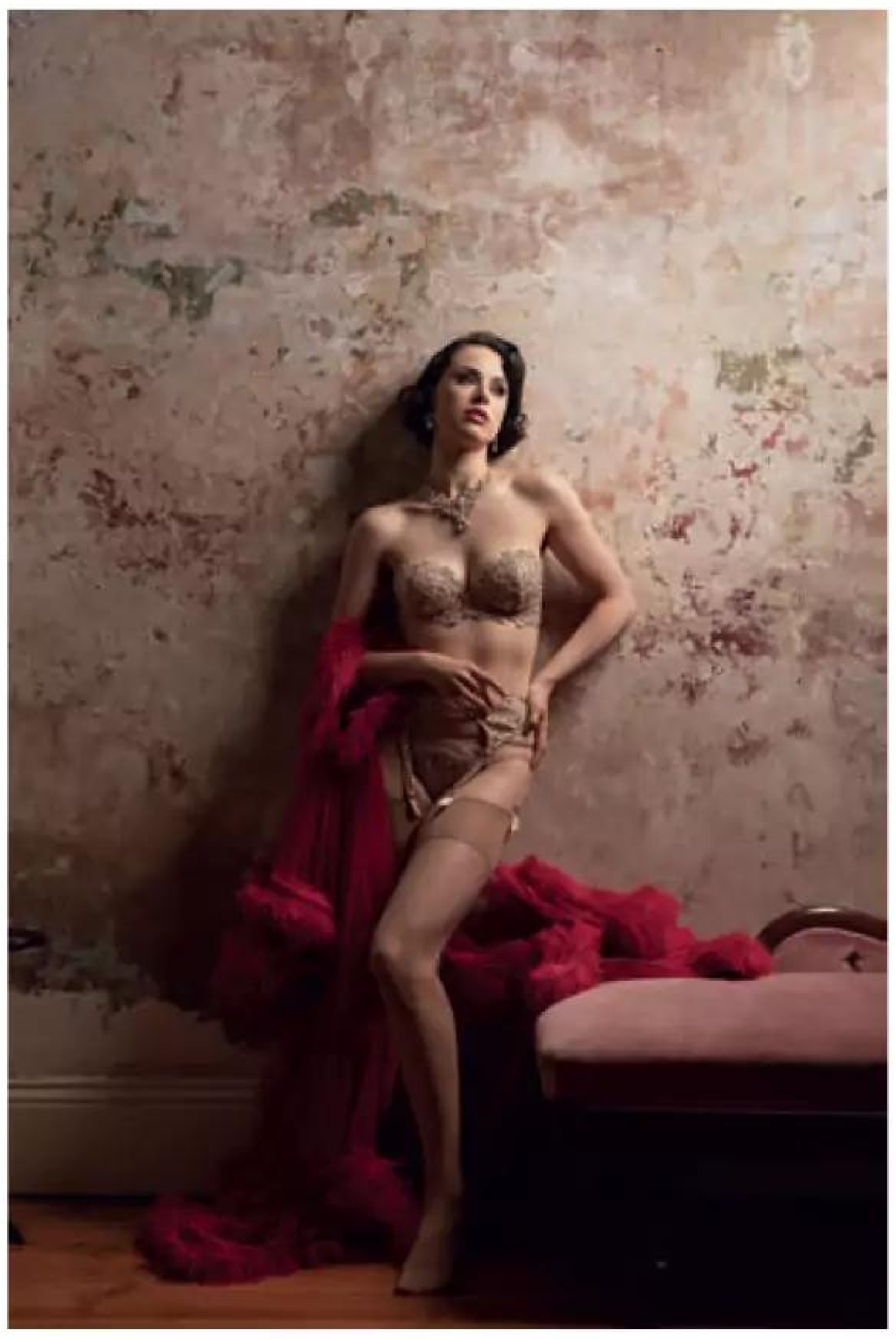
WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

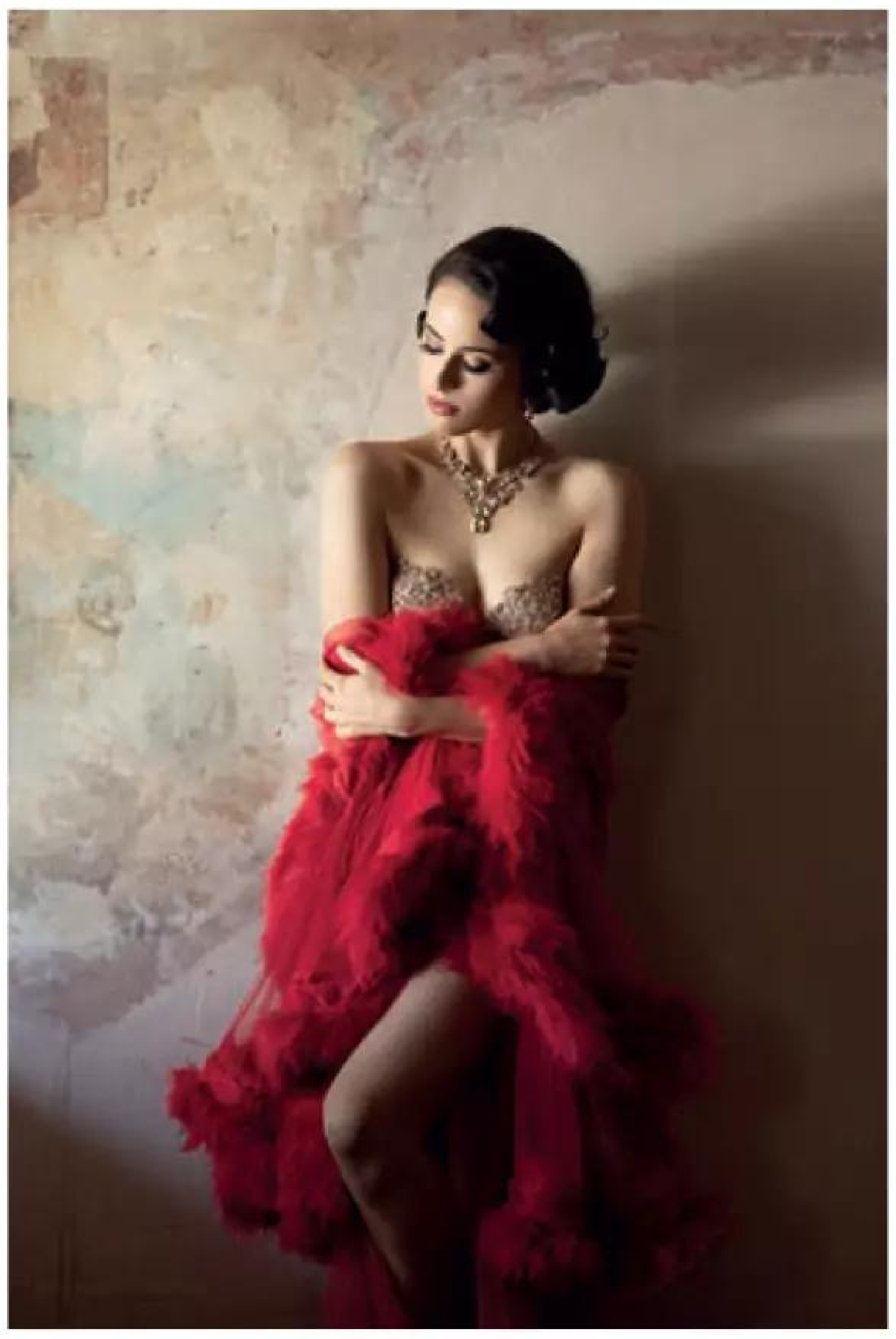
HELEN WHITTLE: This series stands out for its striking use of lighting and rich, warm tones, creating a powerful visual atmosphere. The subject’s poised, confident presence adds mood to the images, resulting in portraits that feel both bold and evocative. The photographer skilfully uses colour and shadow to create an ambiance that is subtly seductive yet tastefully executed. Each pose is deliberate and expressive, contributing to a cohesive and visually captivating series.

PRIZE: $200 Ted’s Cameras voucher.



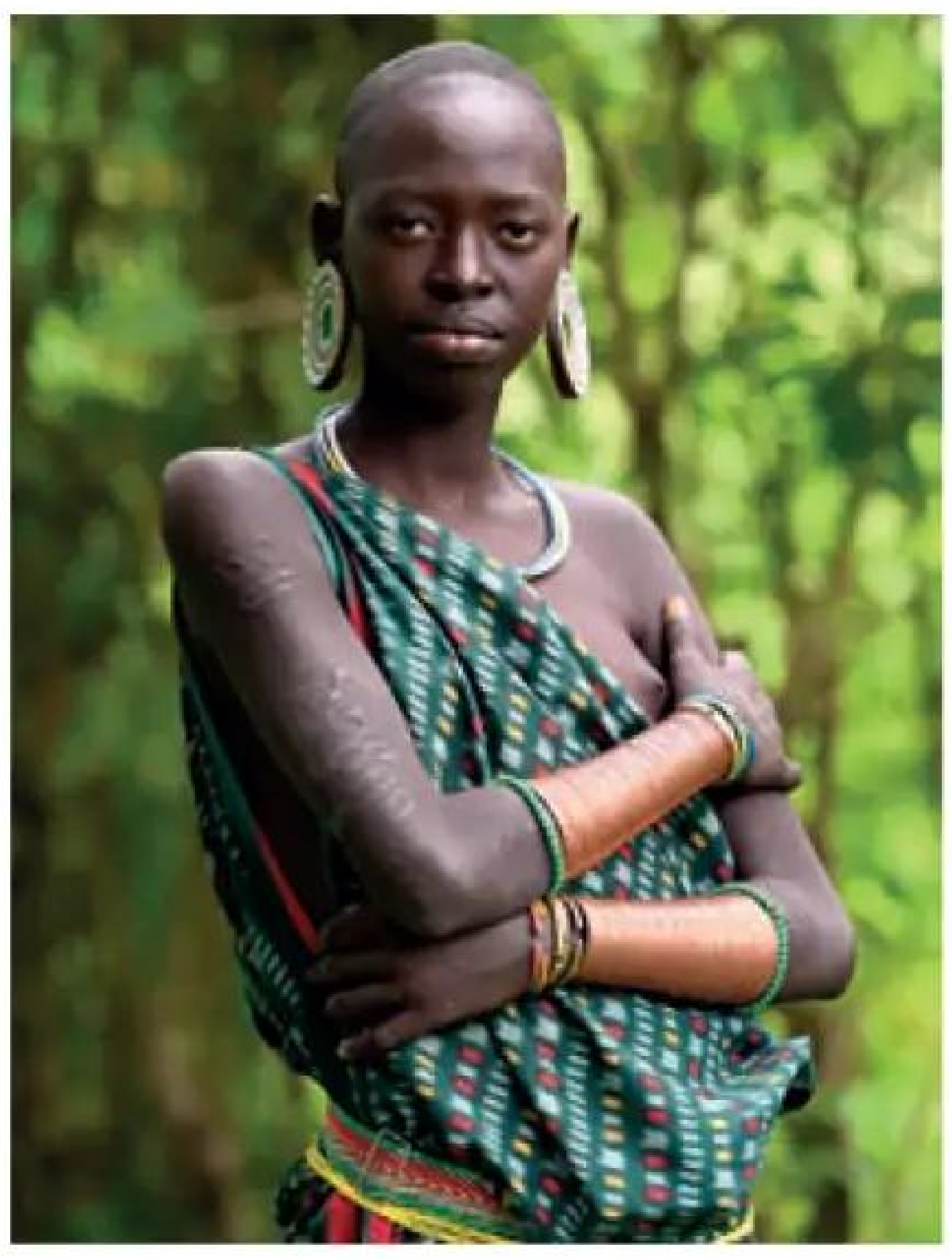


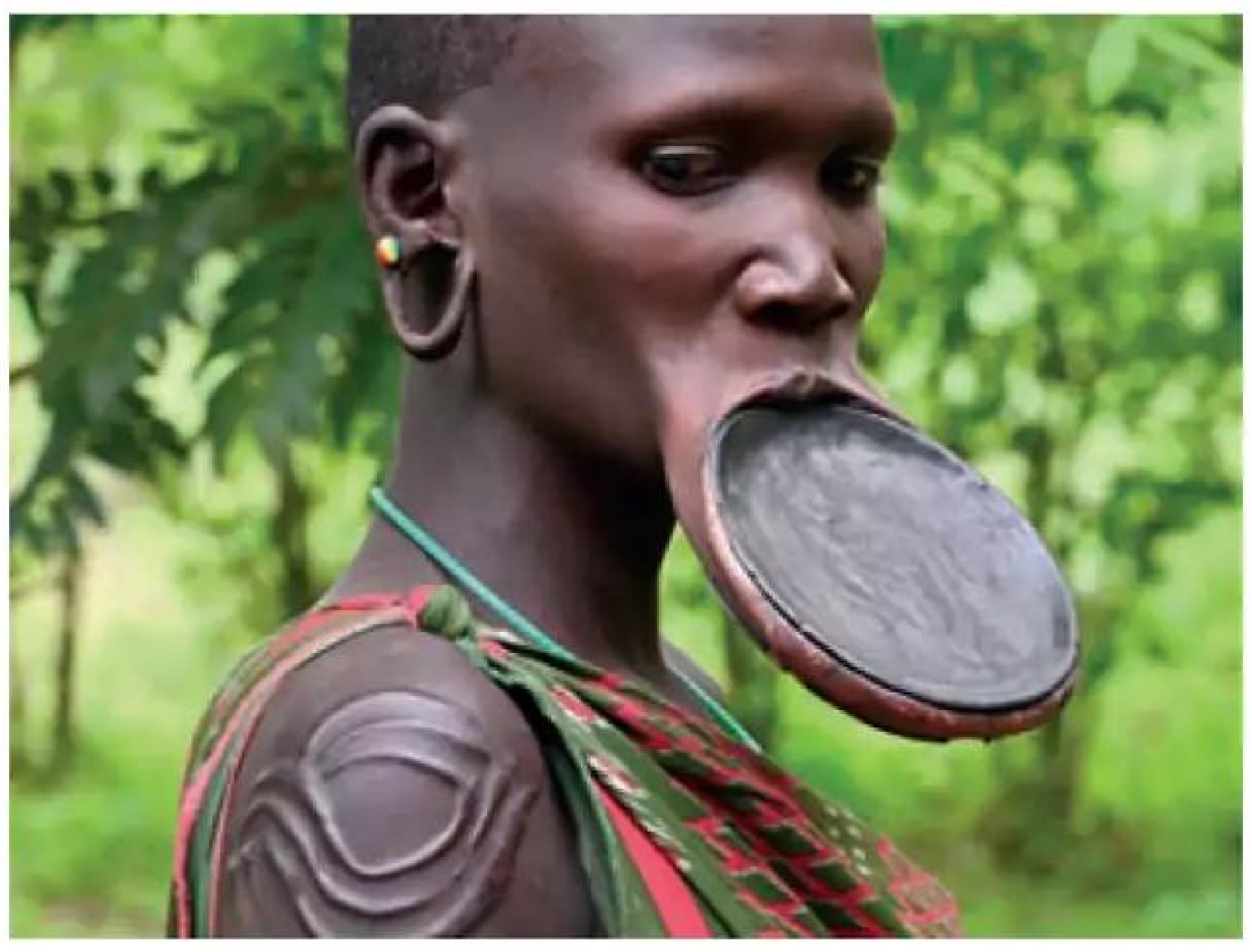


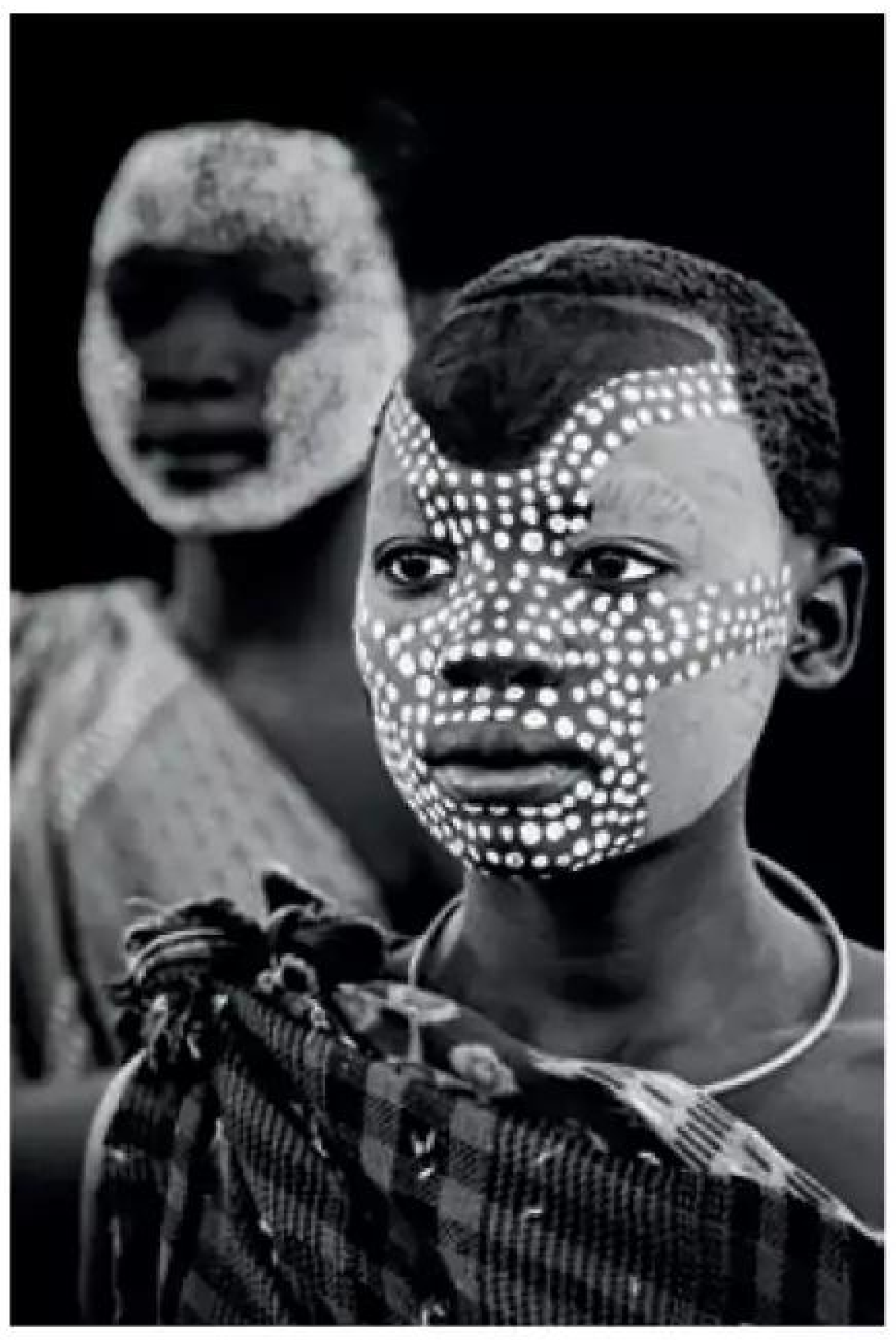


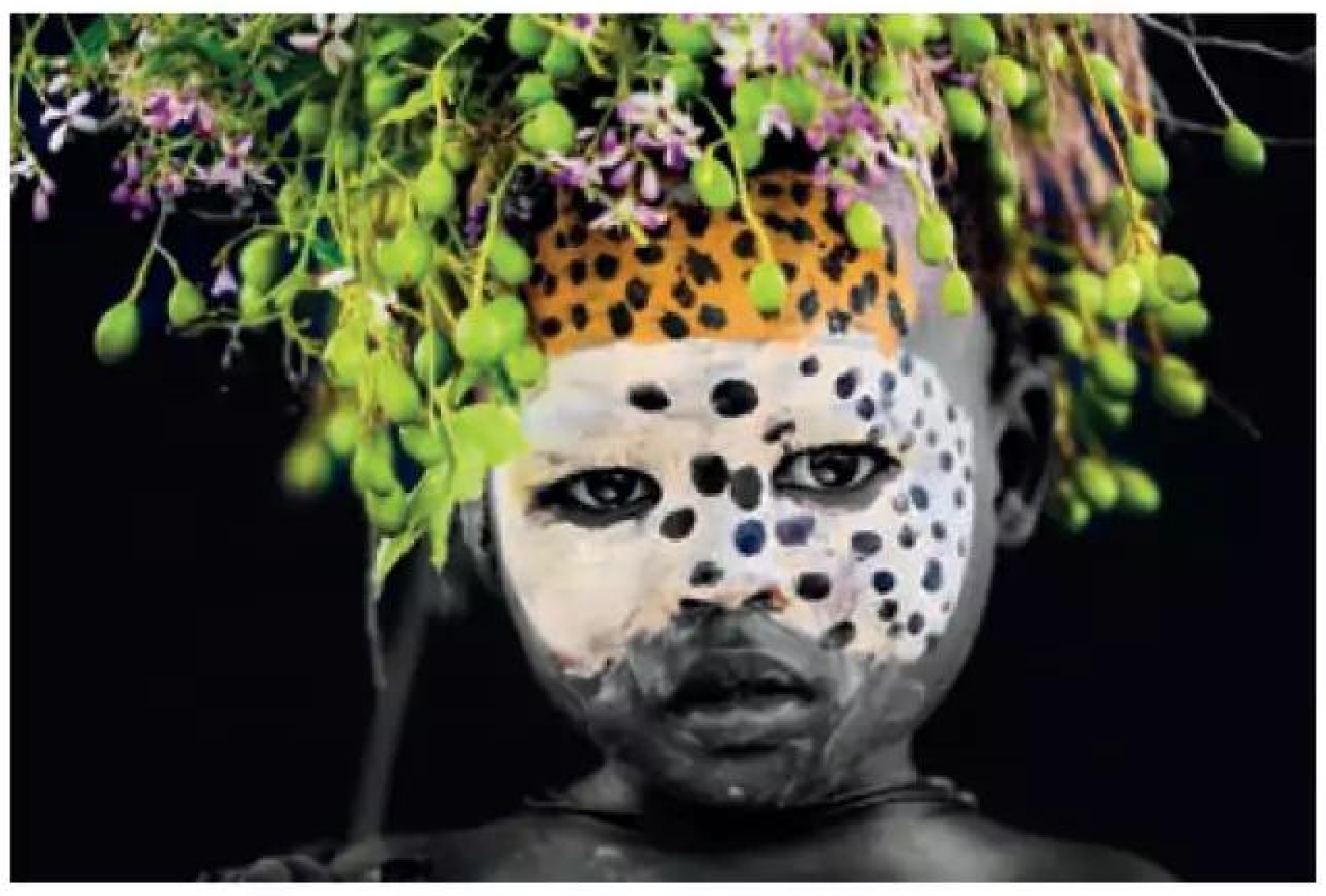
3. MARISA BALDINI

ETHIOPIA



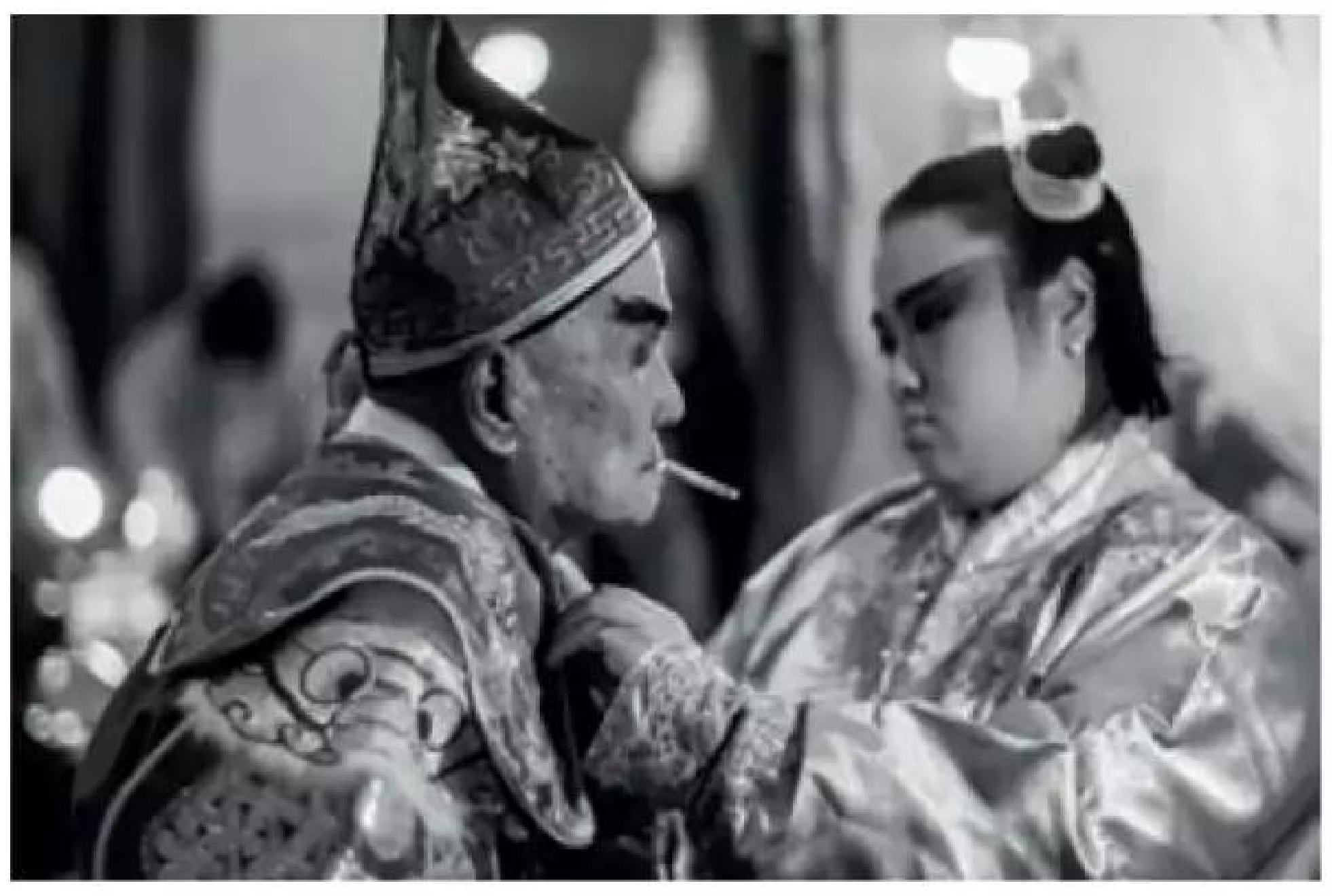


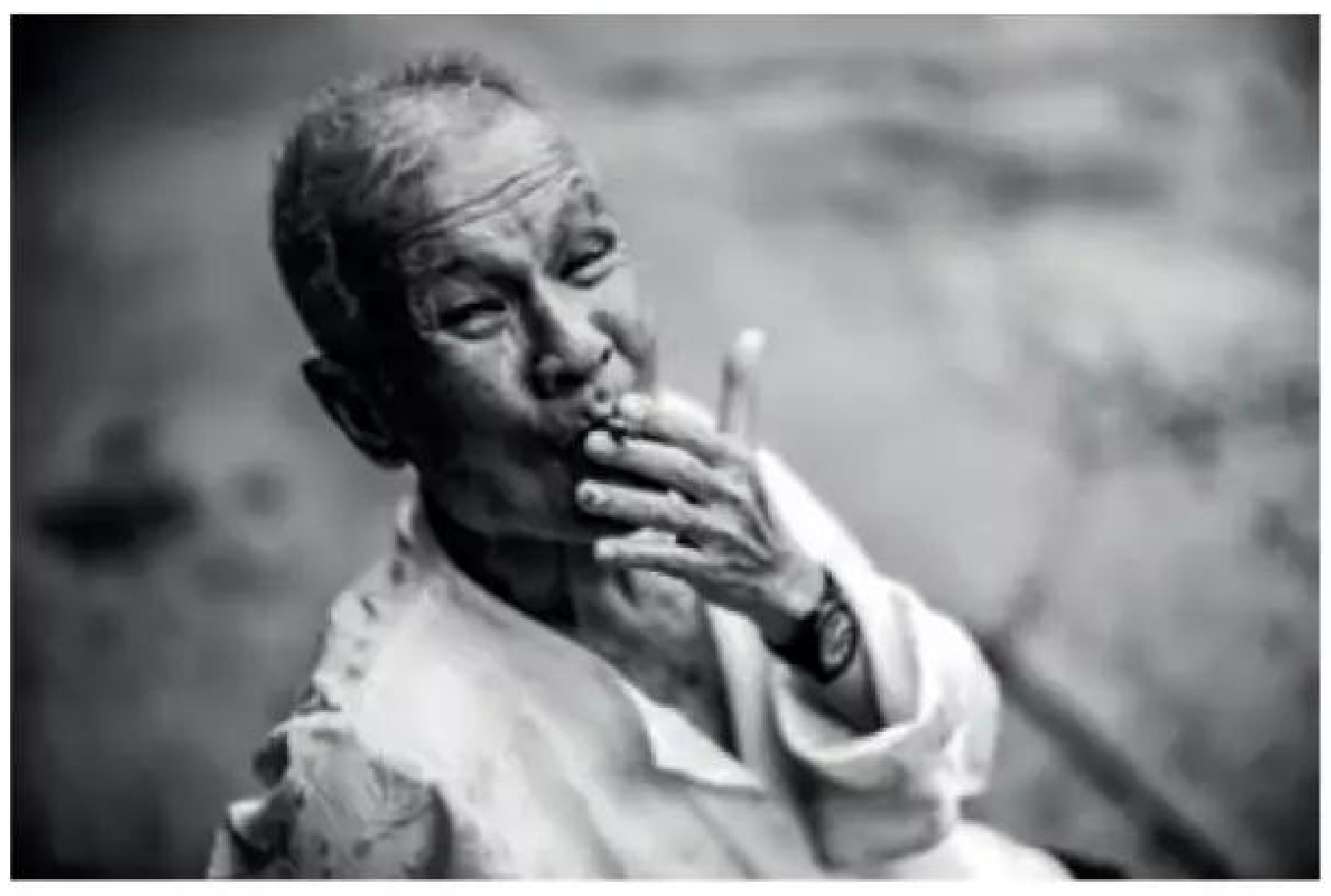


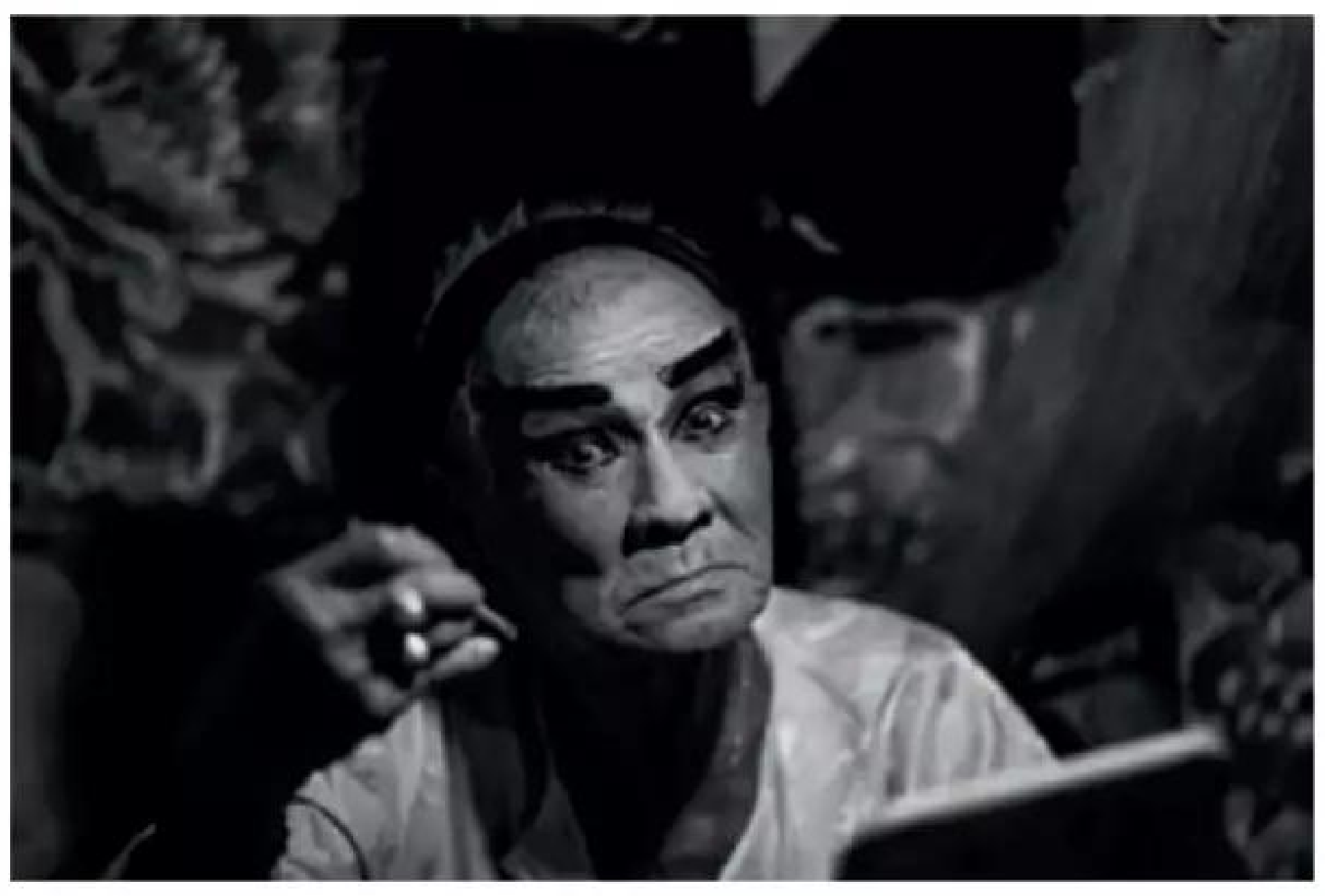


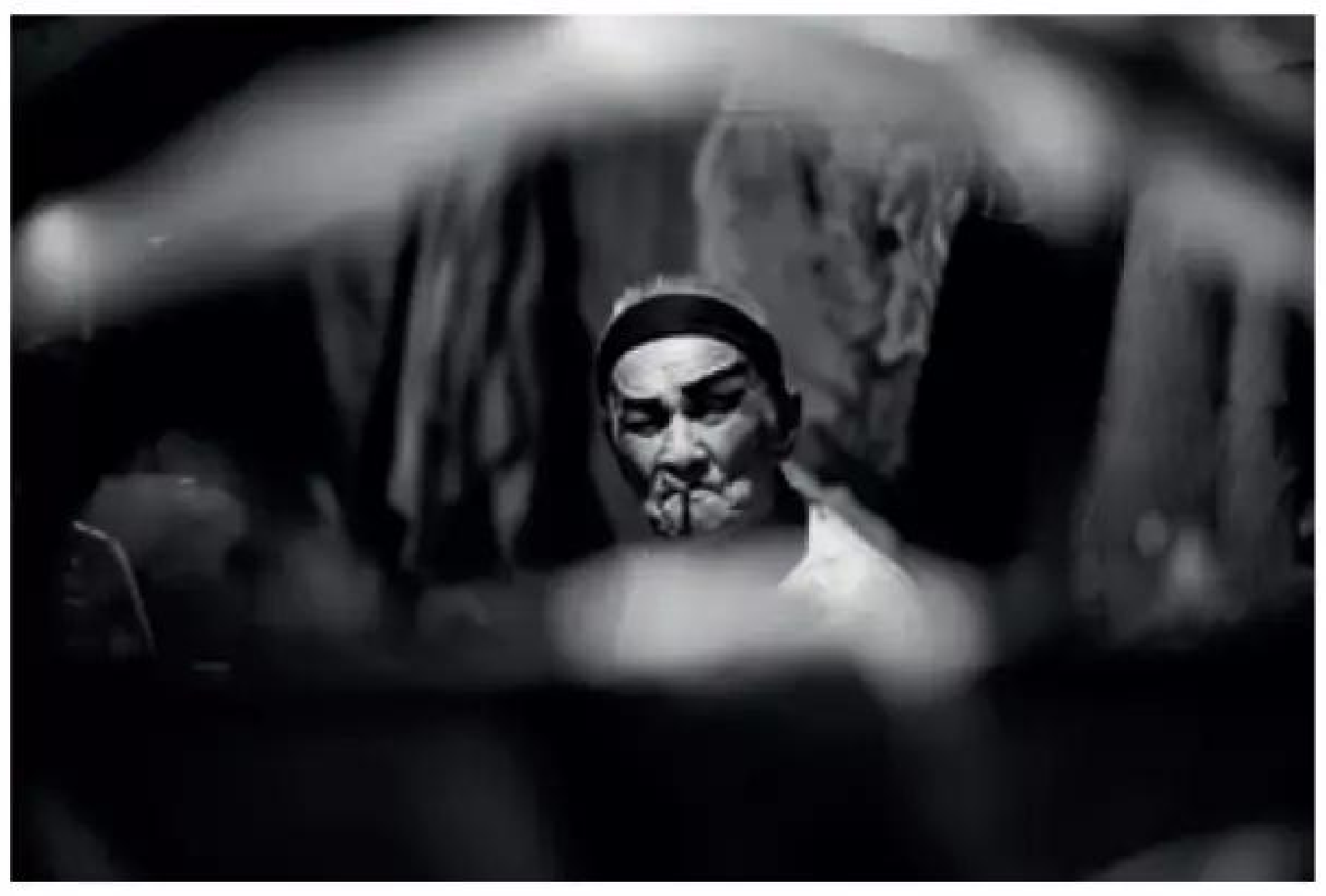
4. ERIC WONG

METAMORPHOSIS… TRANSFORMATION OF A CHINESE OPERA SINGER



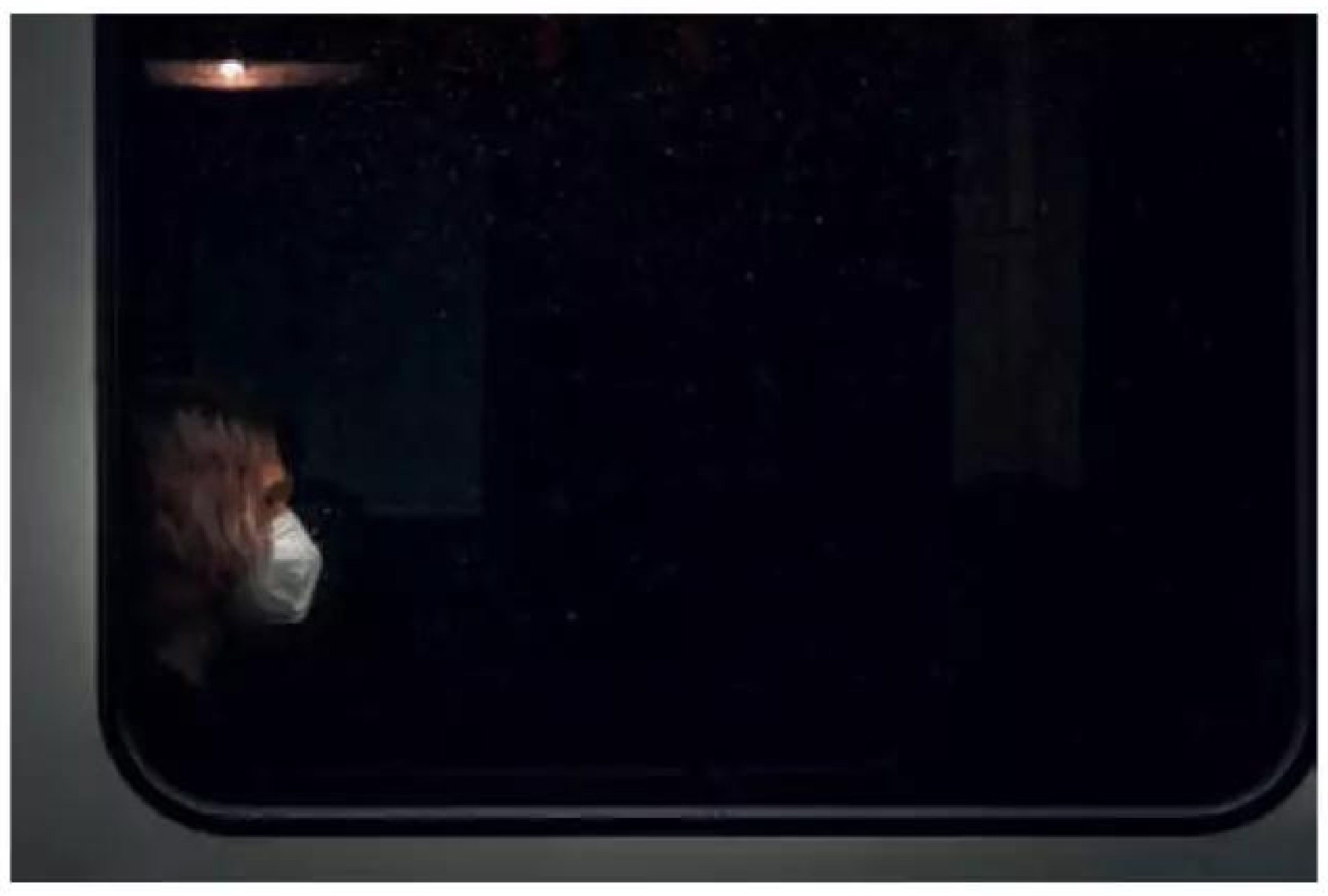


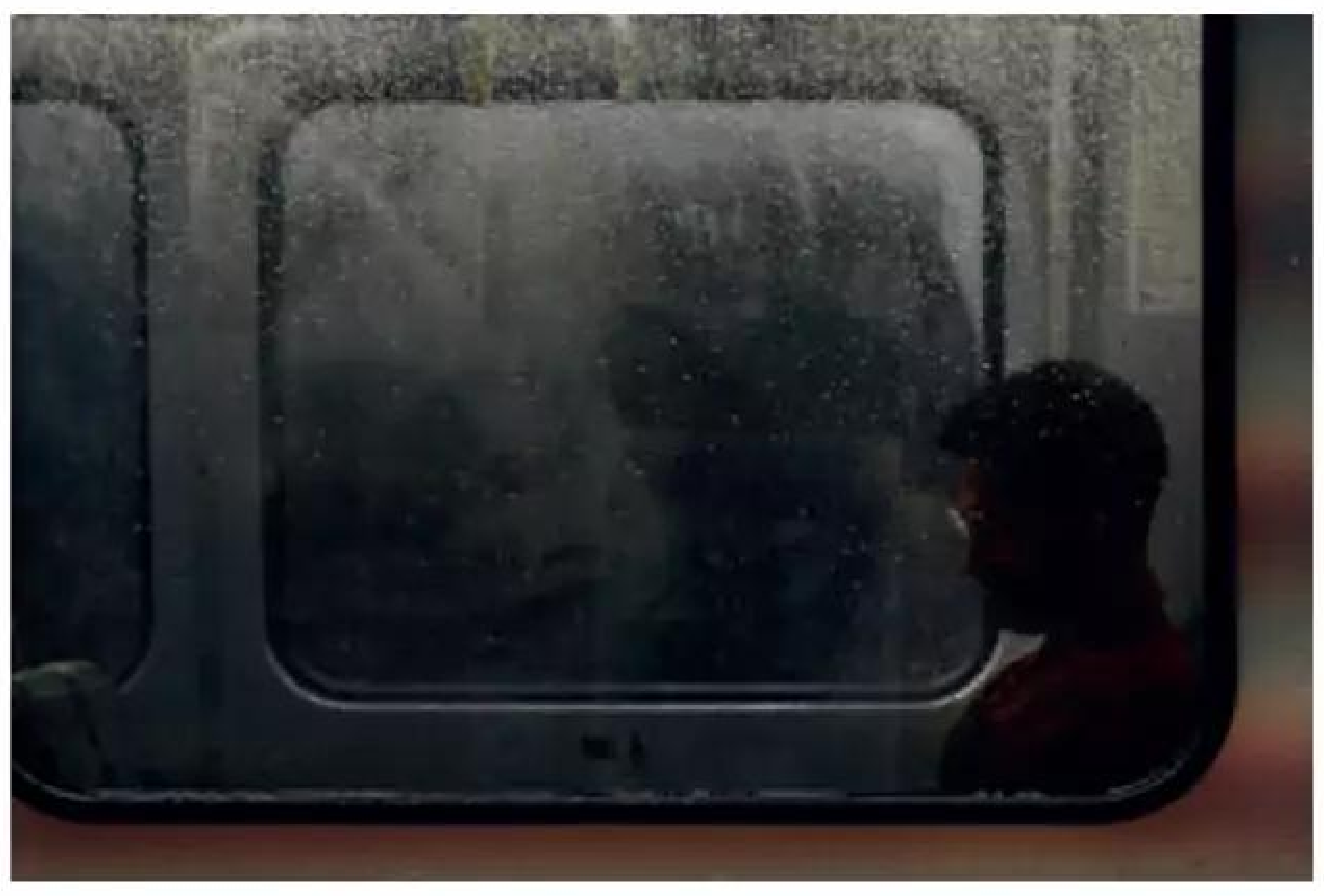


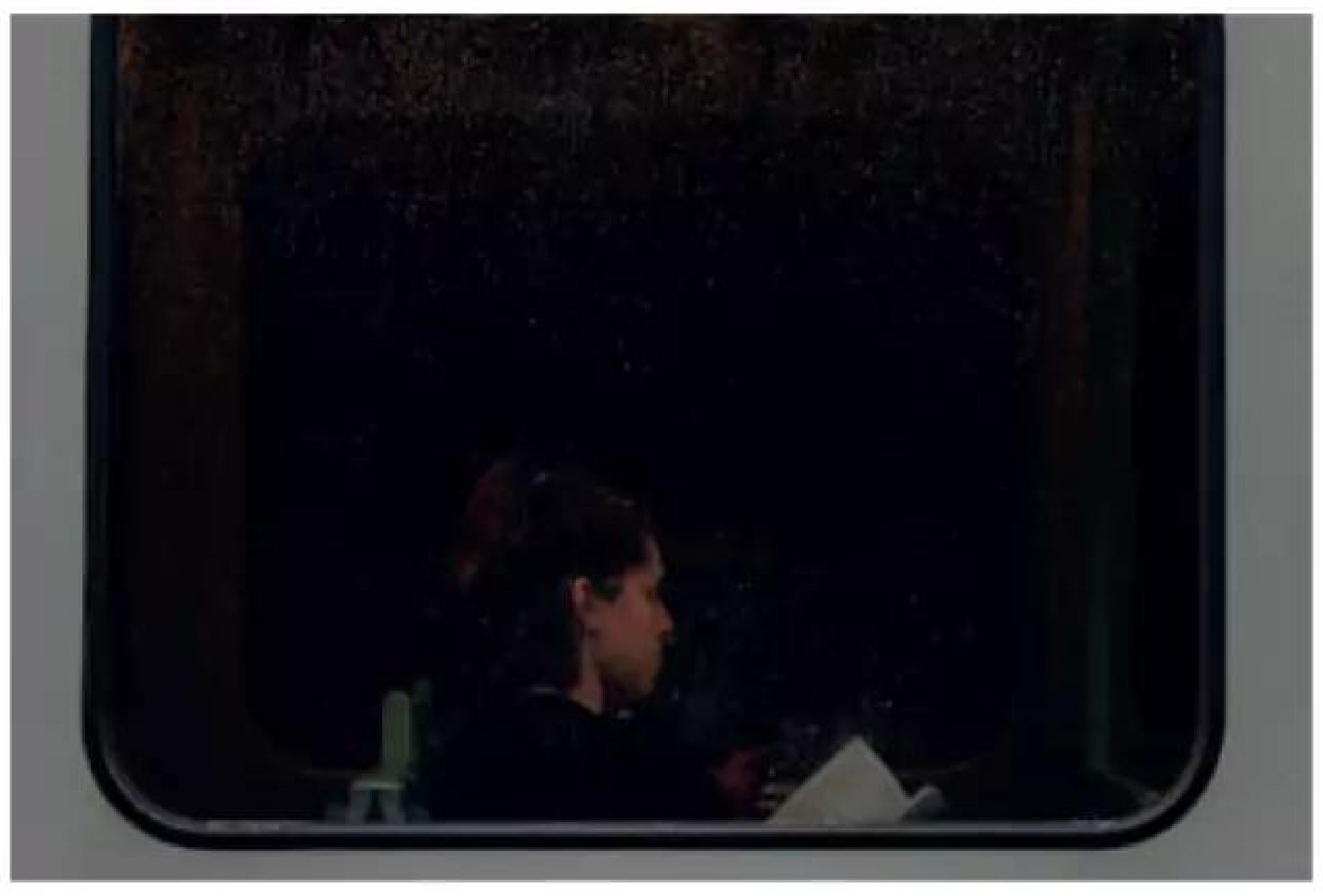


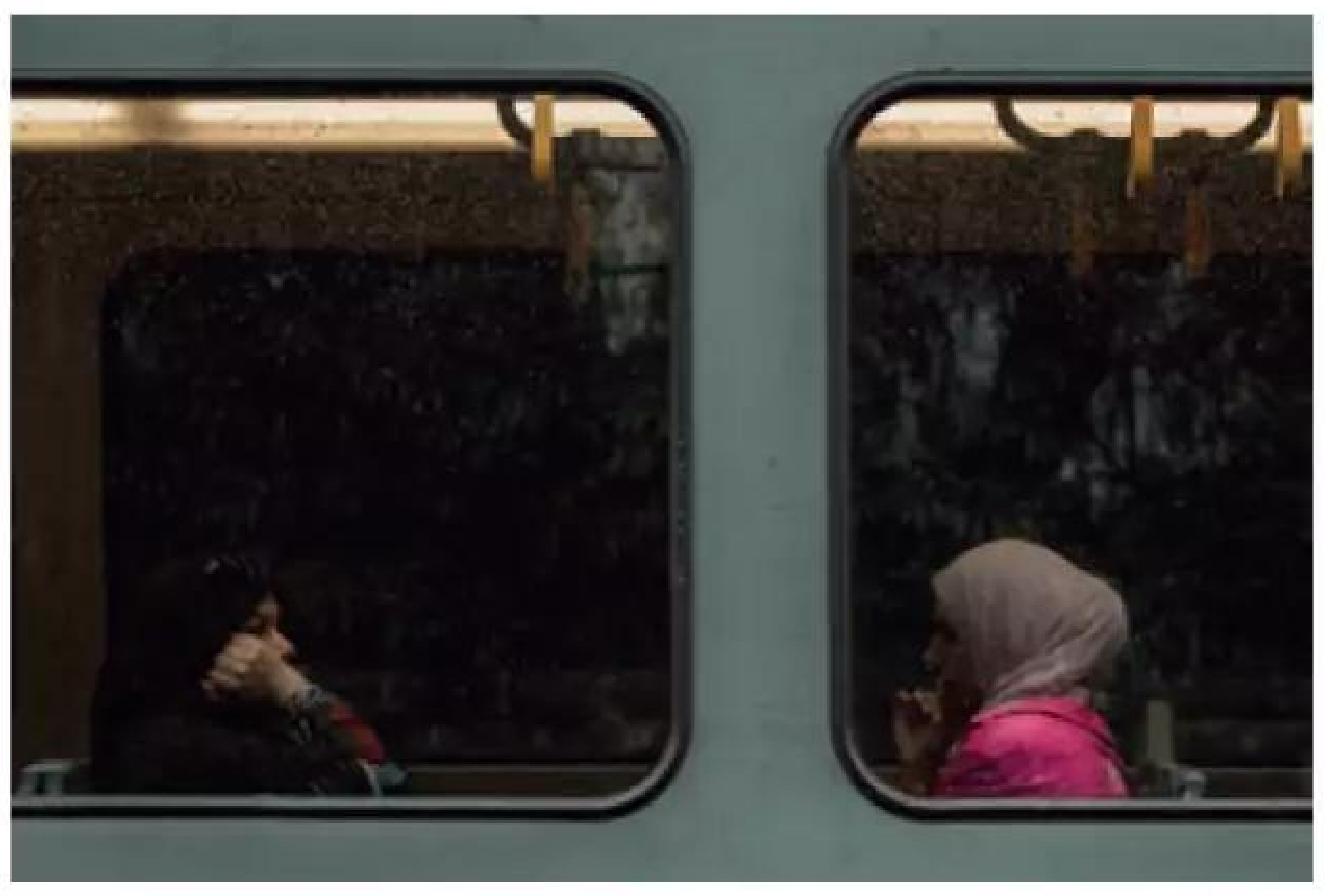
5. TERESA QIN

COMMUTE



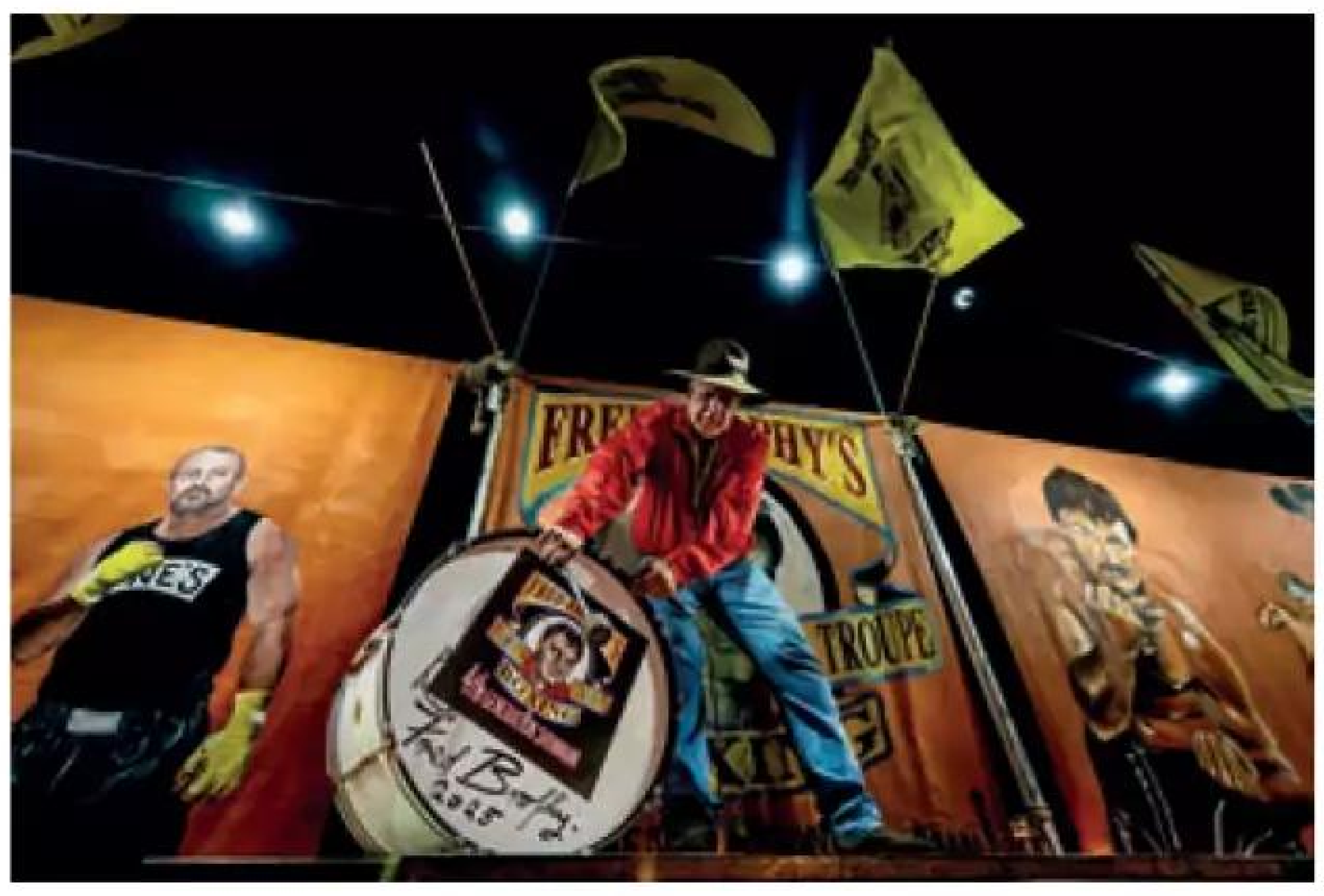


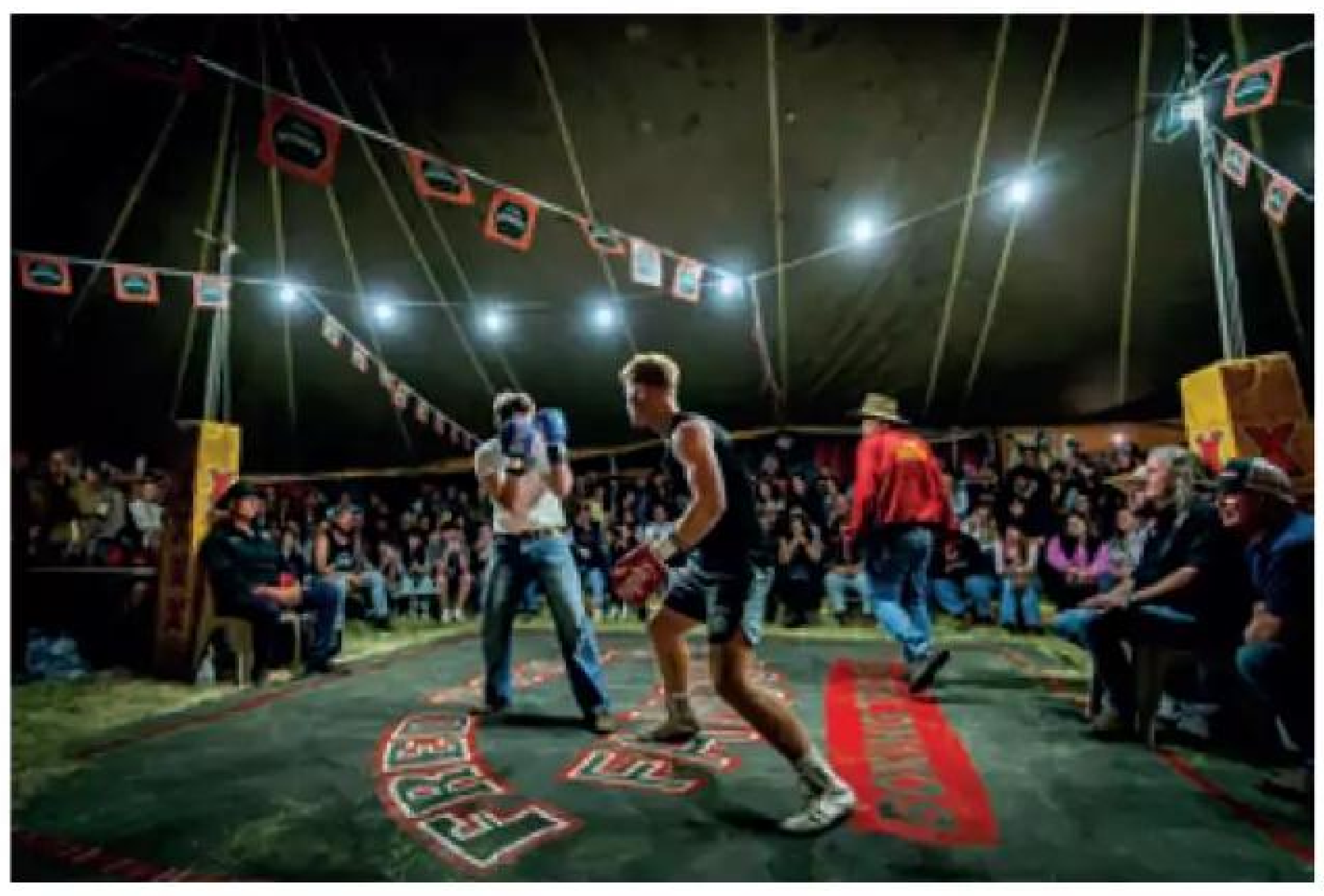


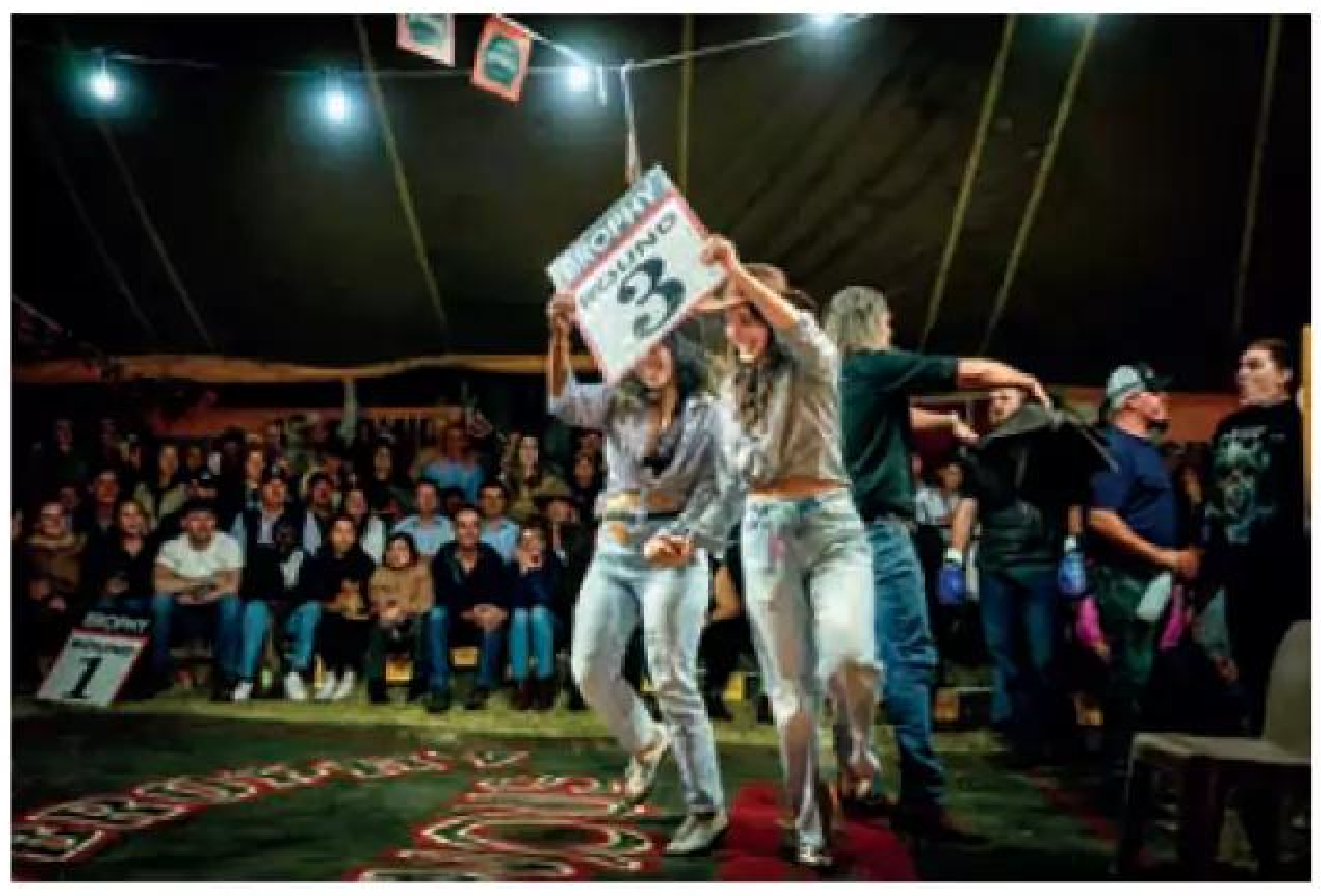


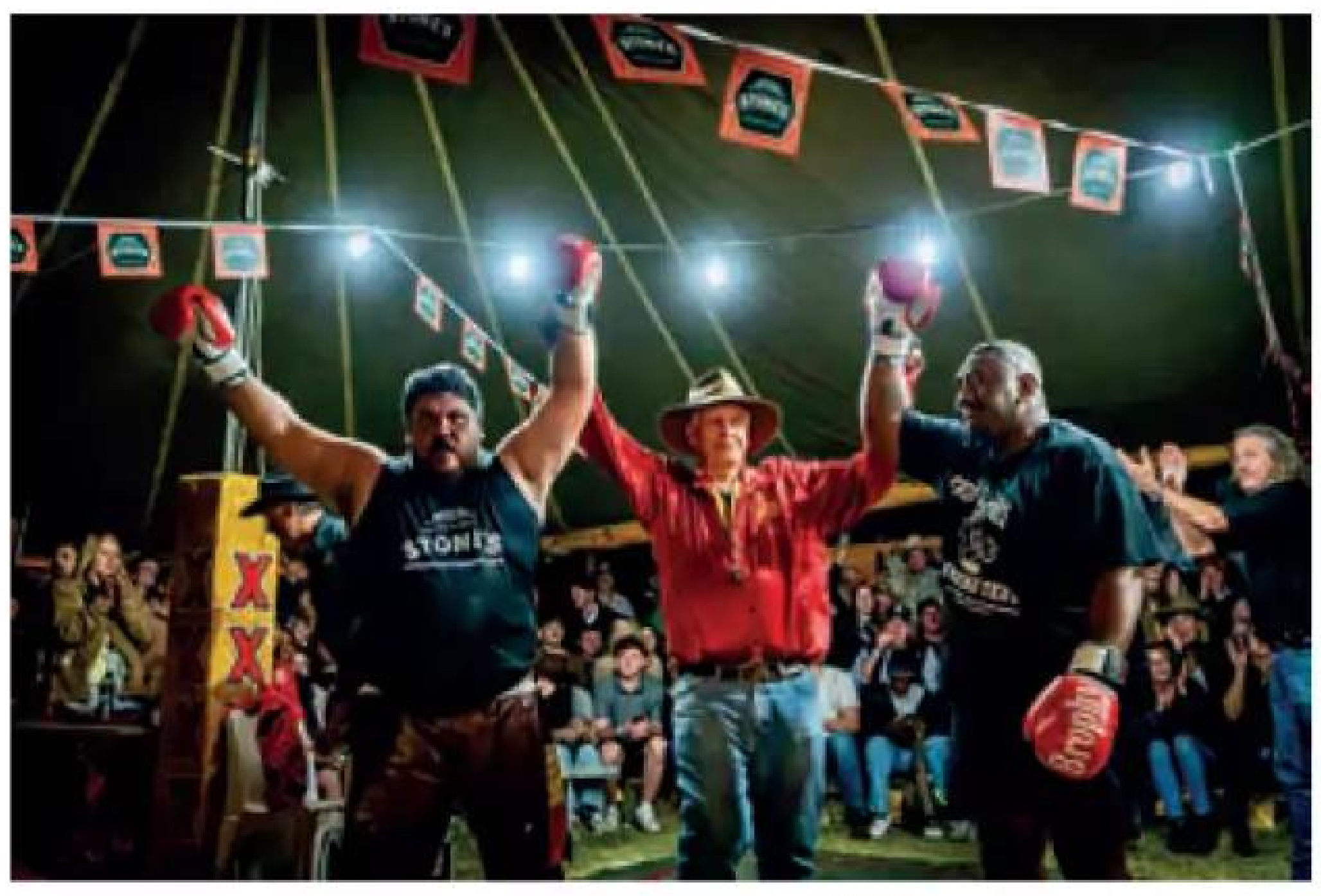
6. GRANT HUNT

END OF AN ERA



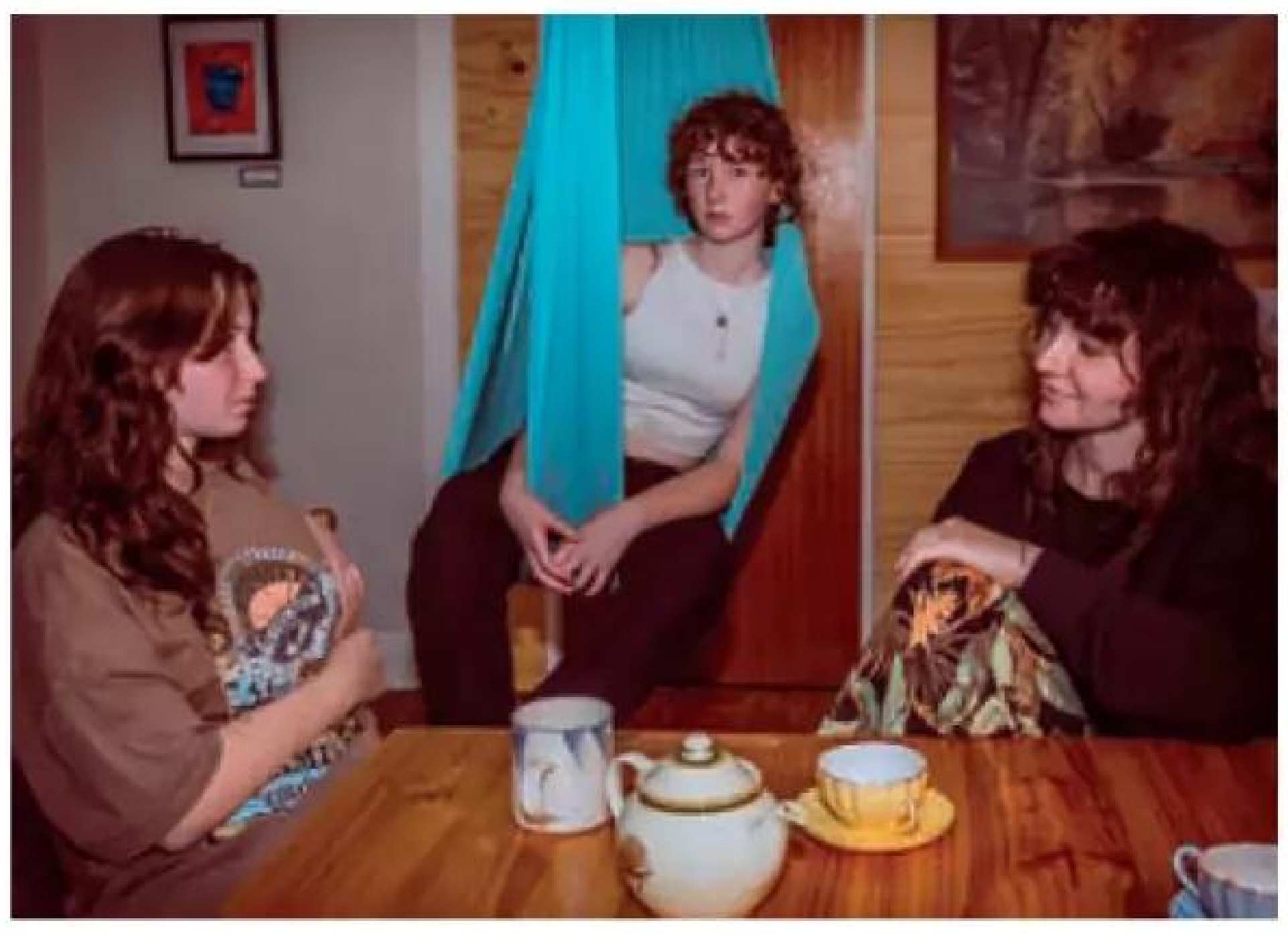


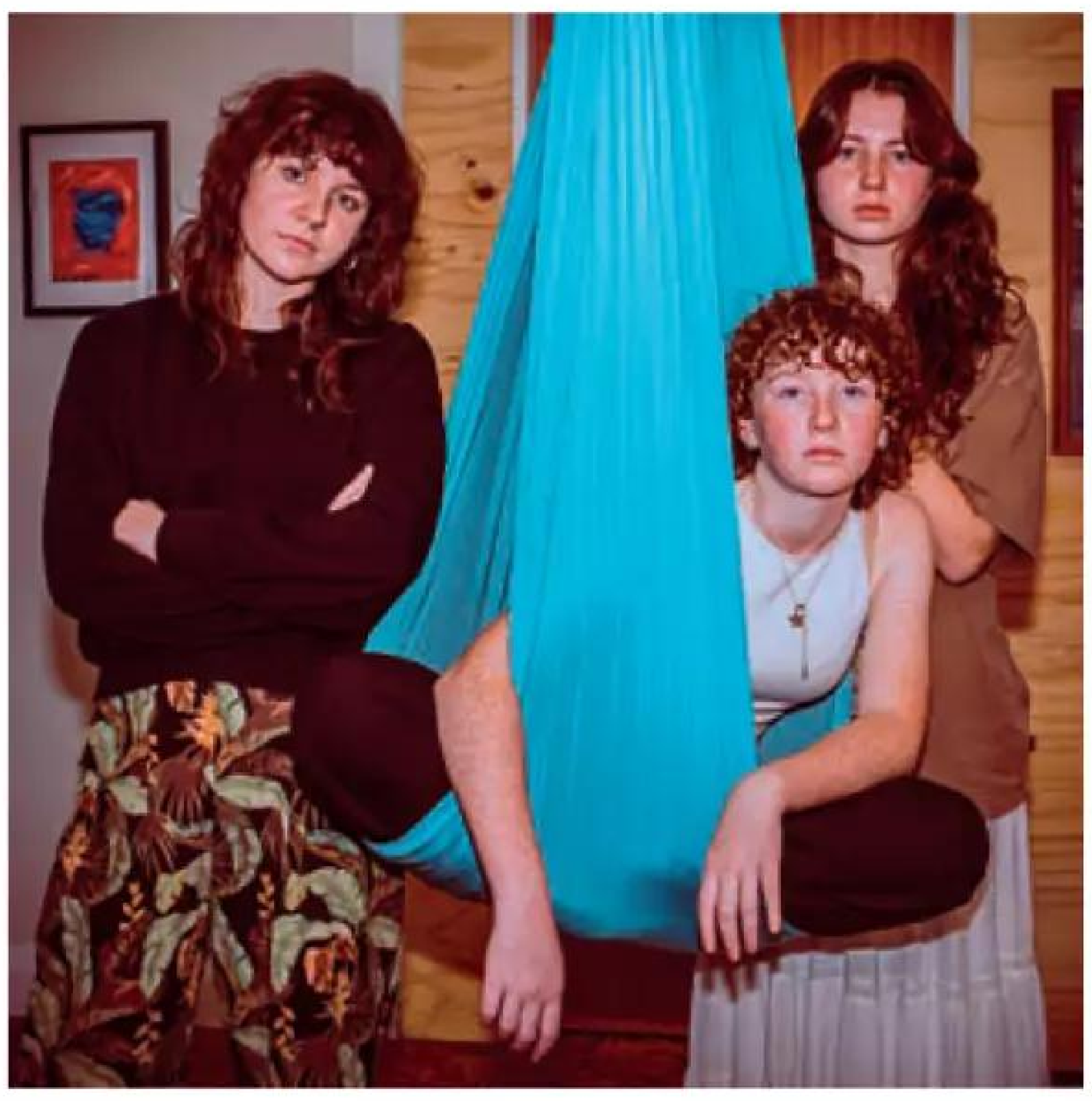


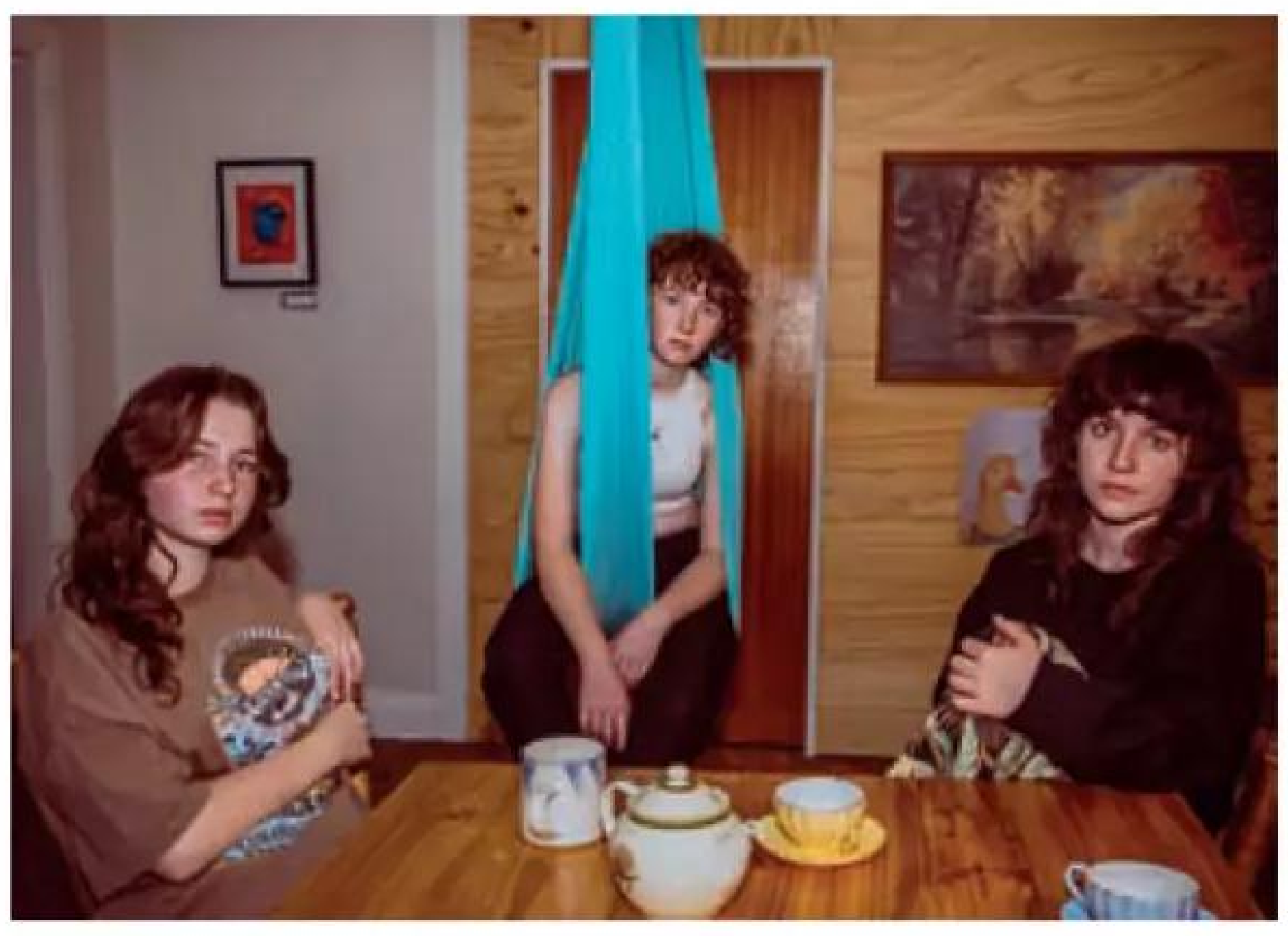


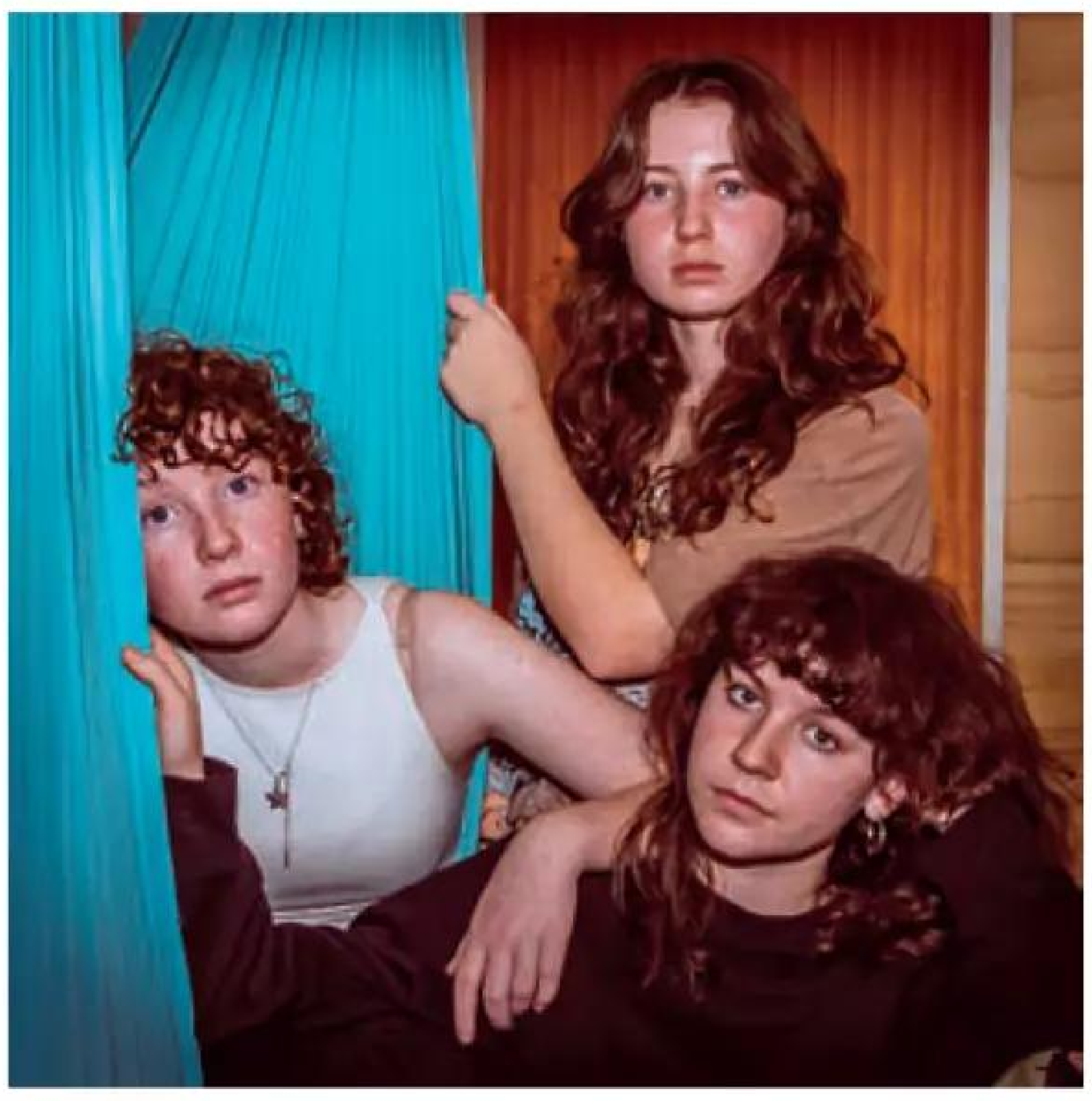
7. JULIE SPENCER

SIBLINGS



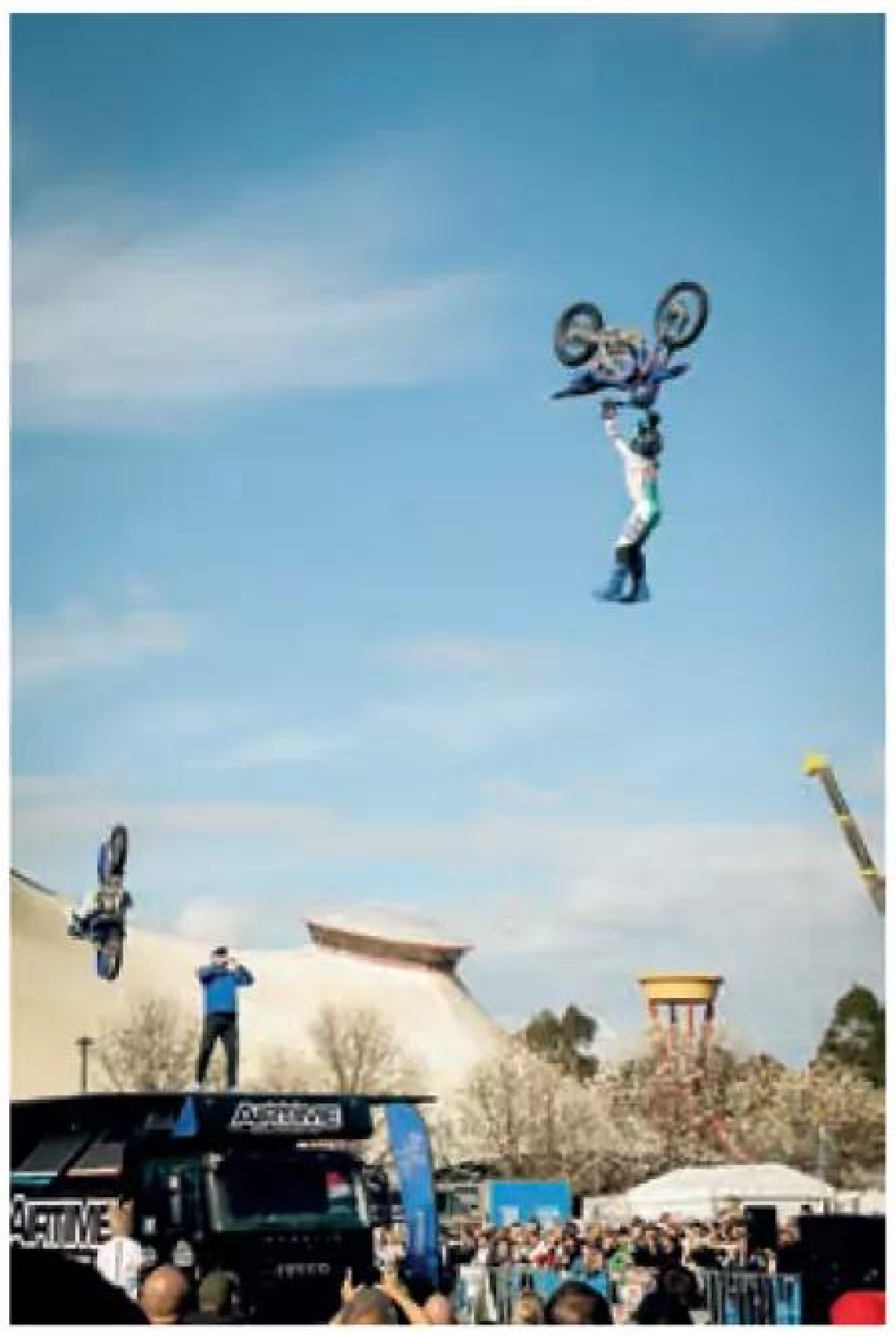


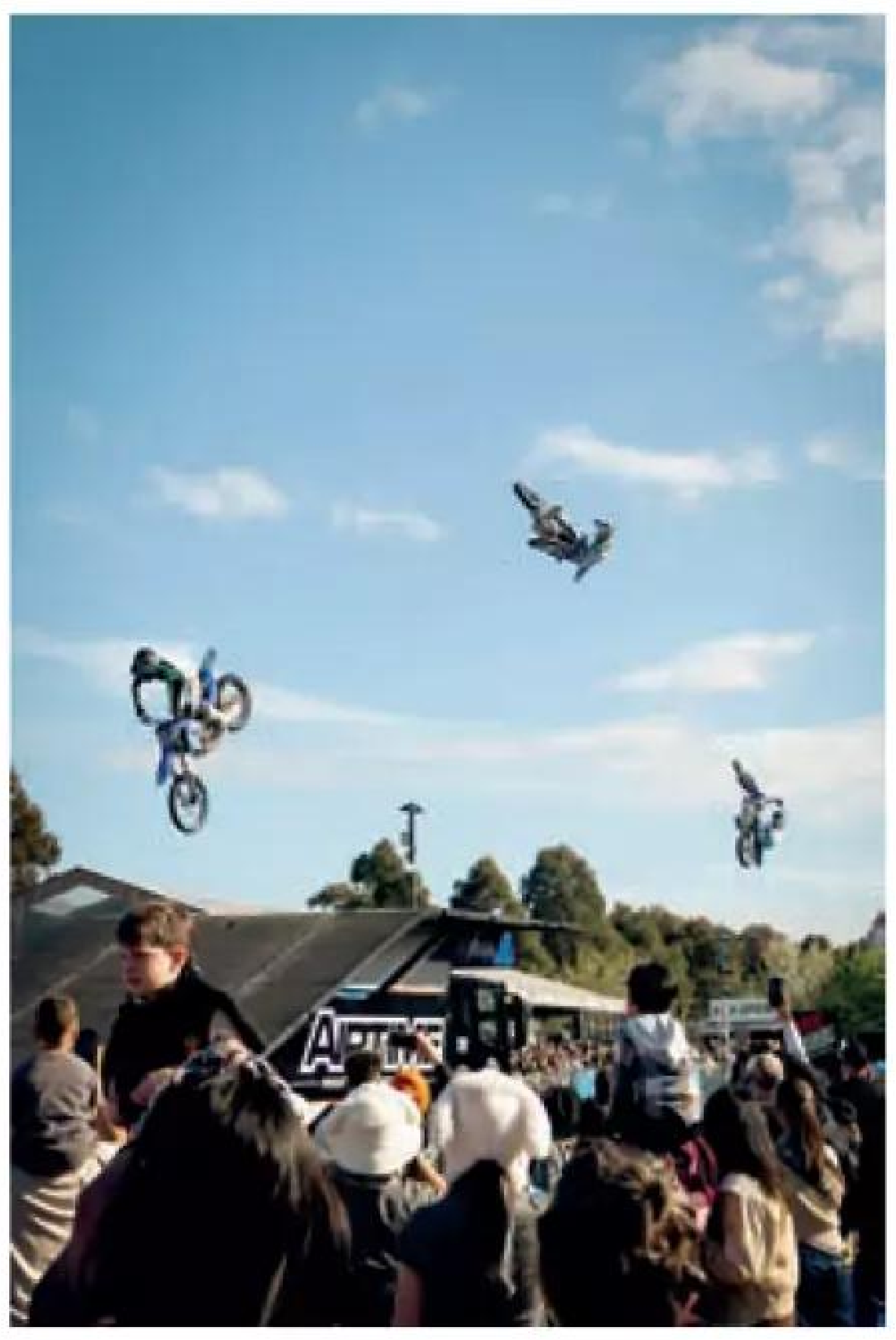


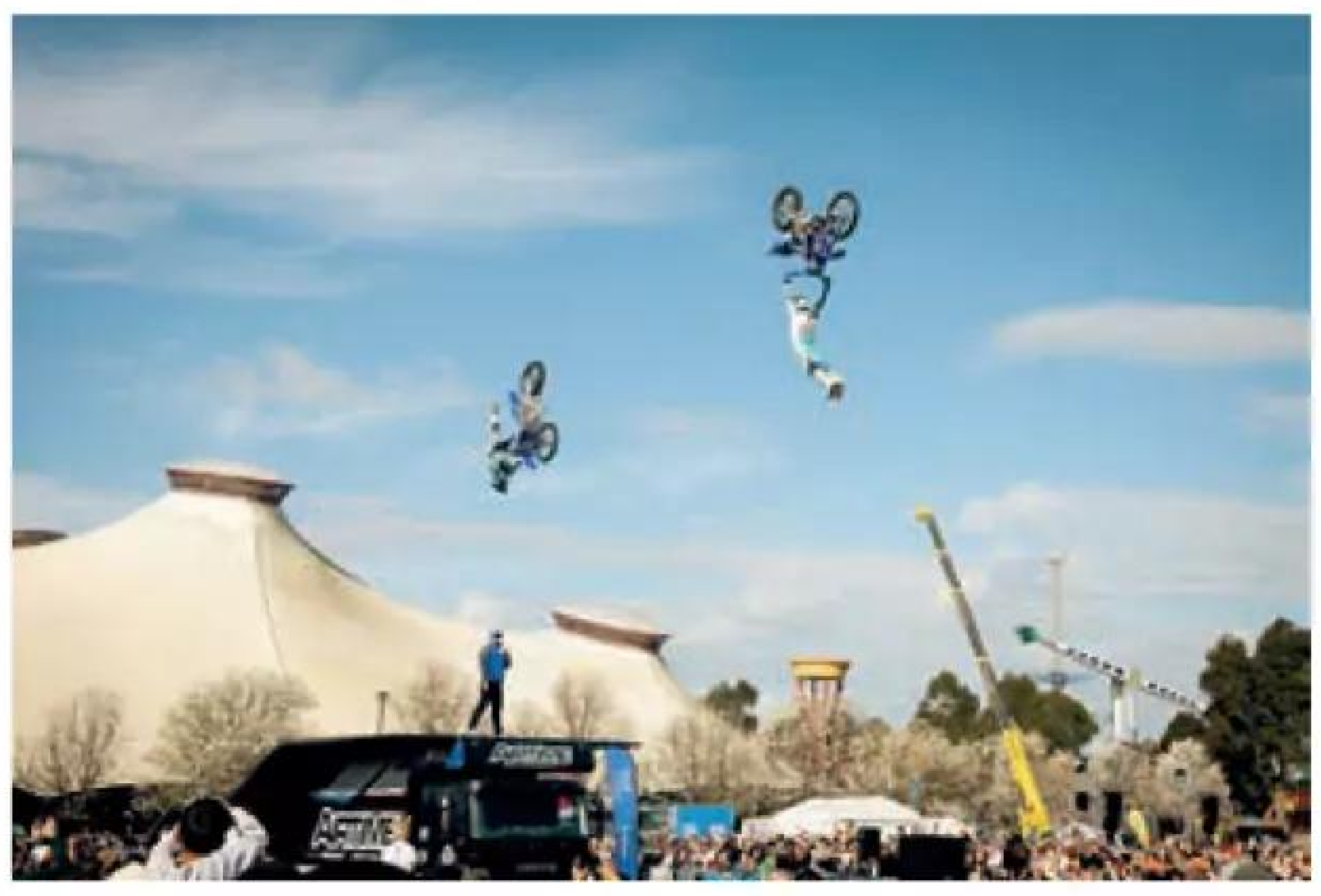


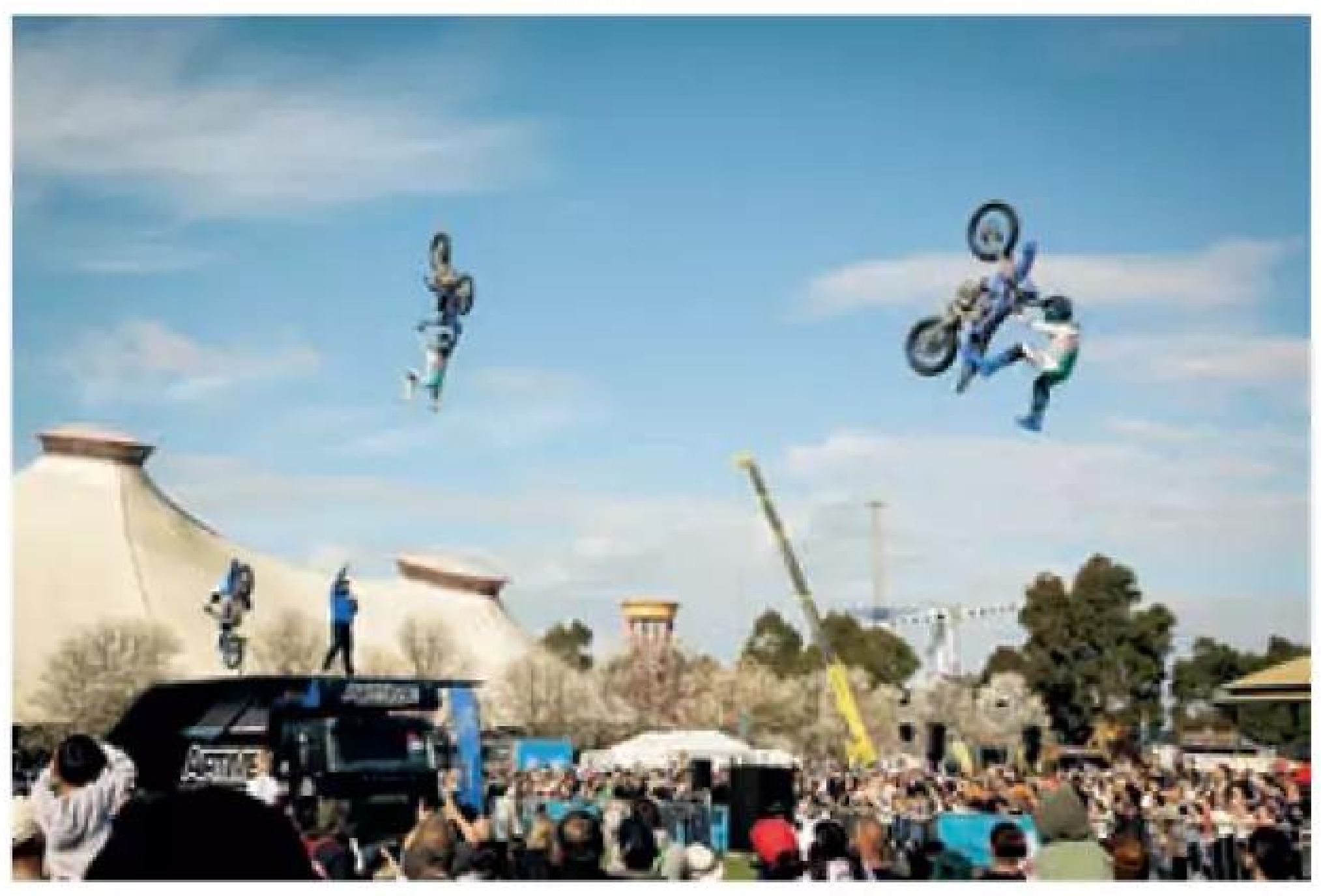
8. OWEN MCLACHLAN

DEFYING GRAVITY



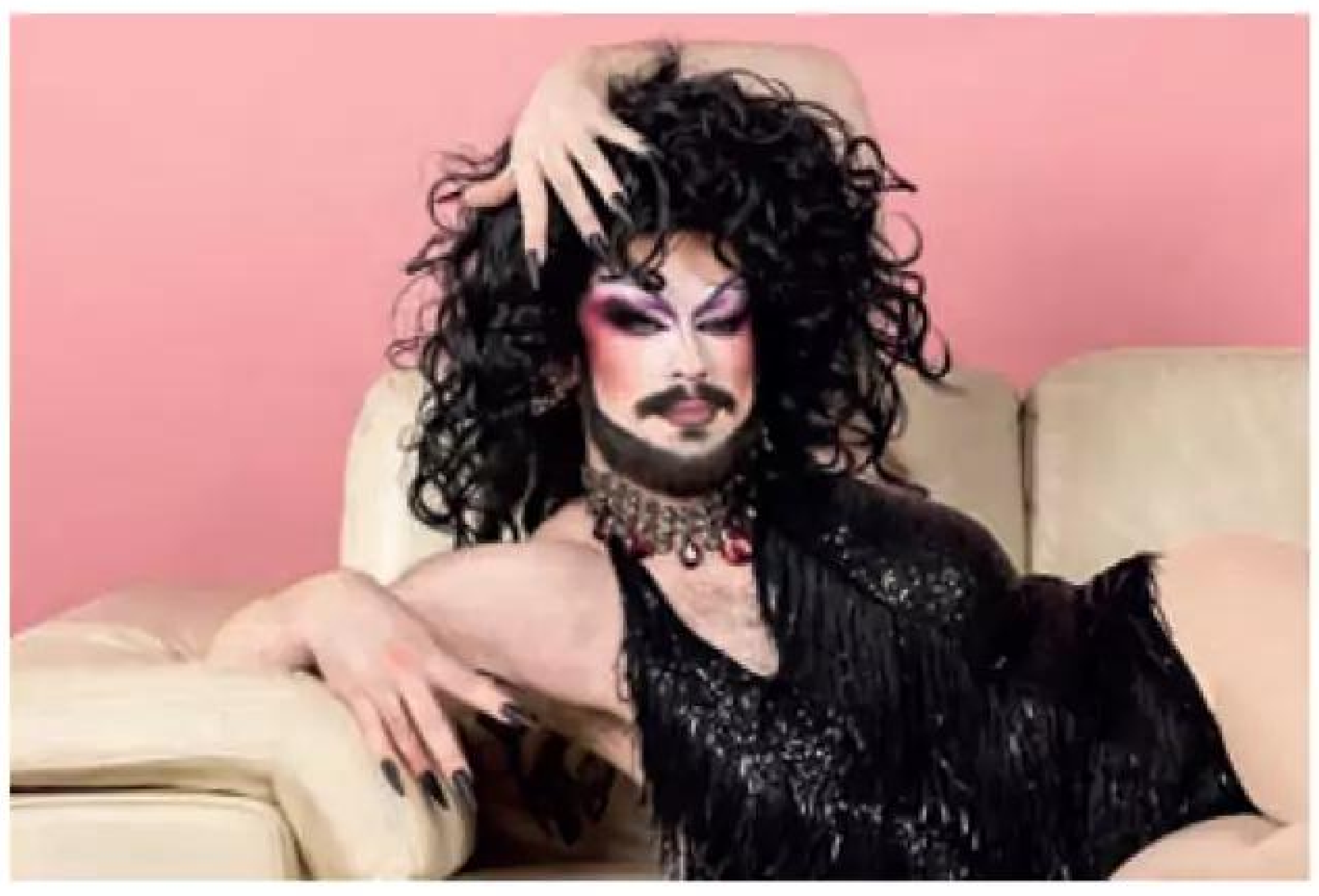


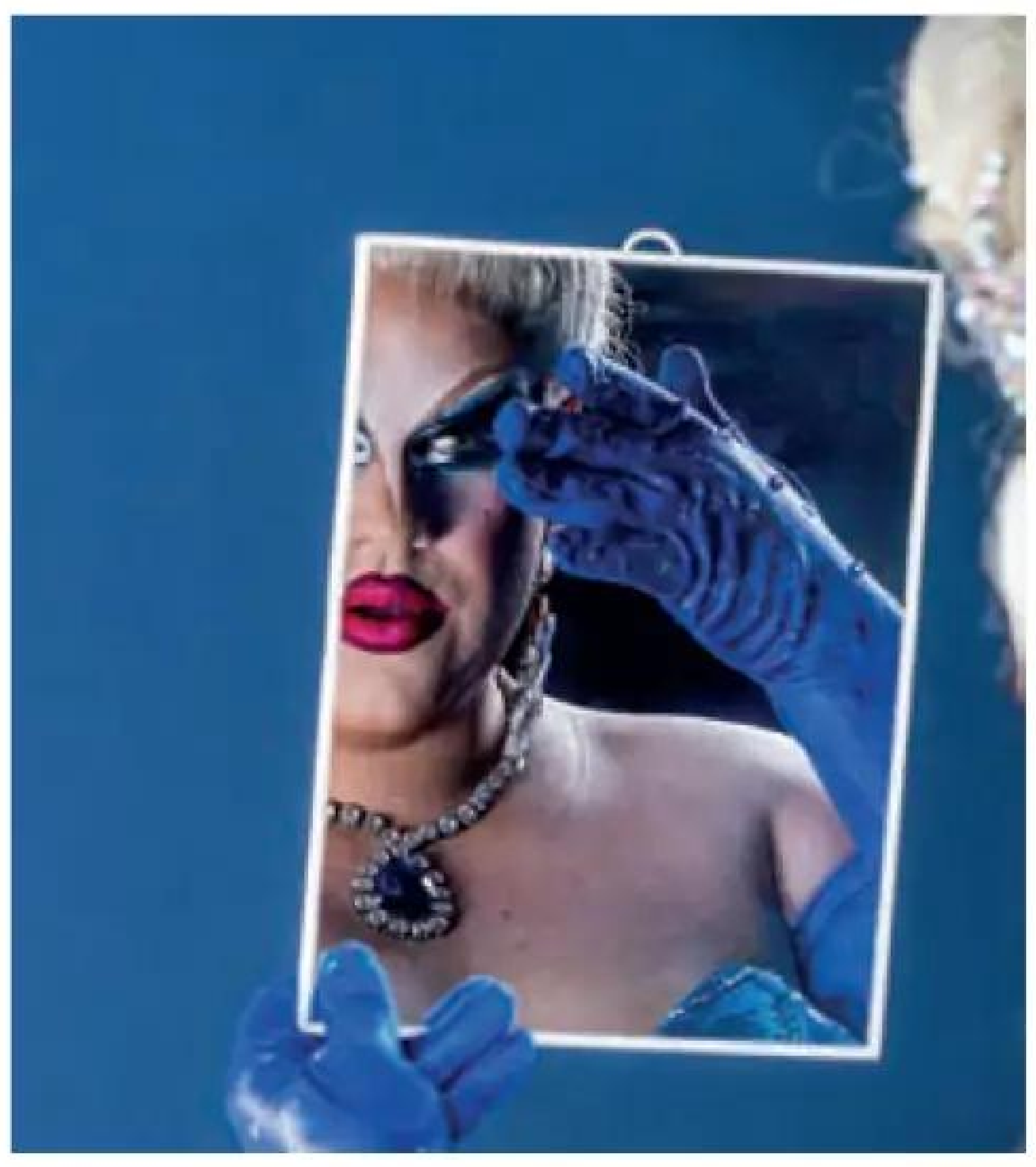


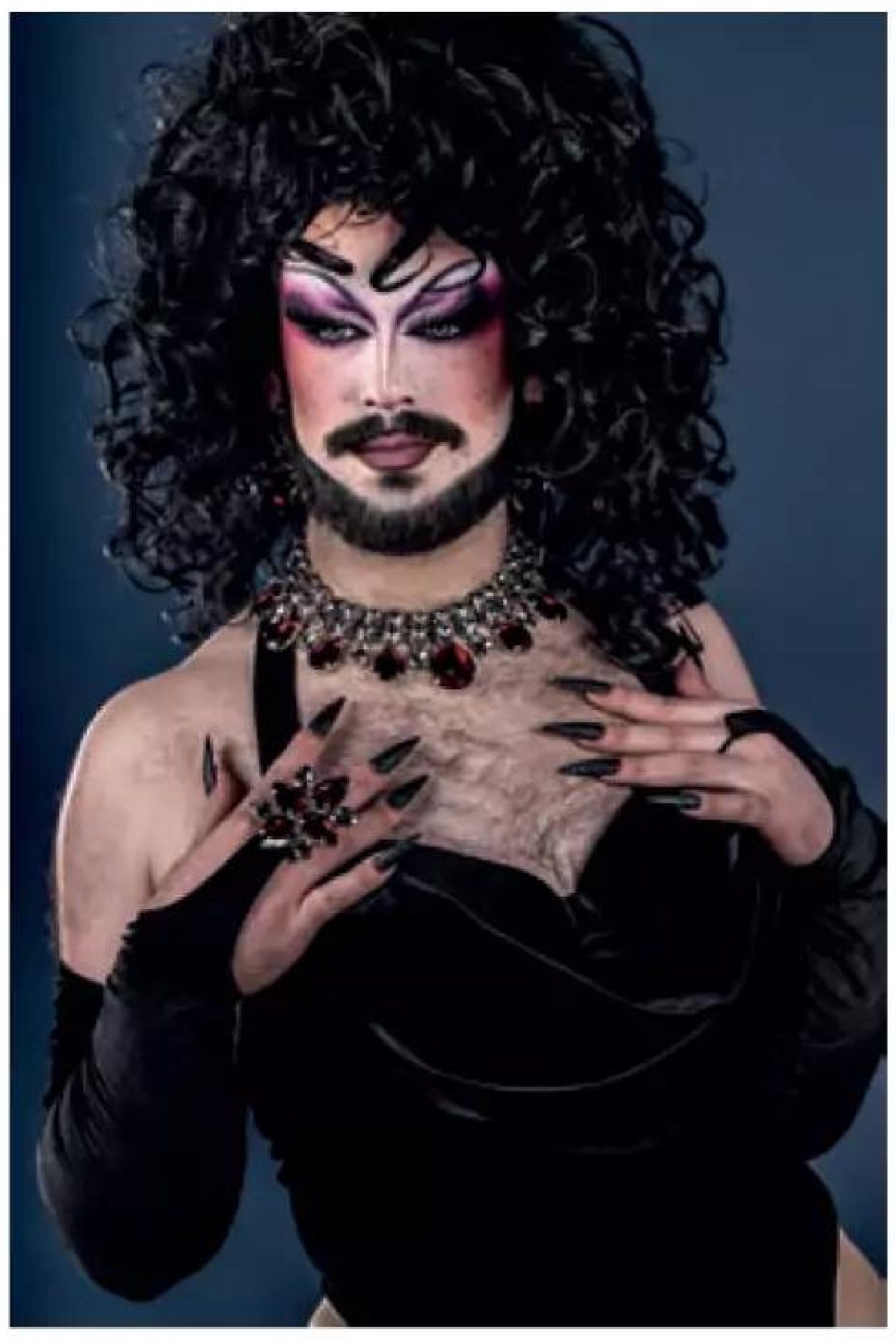


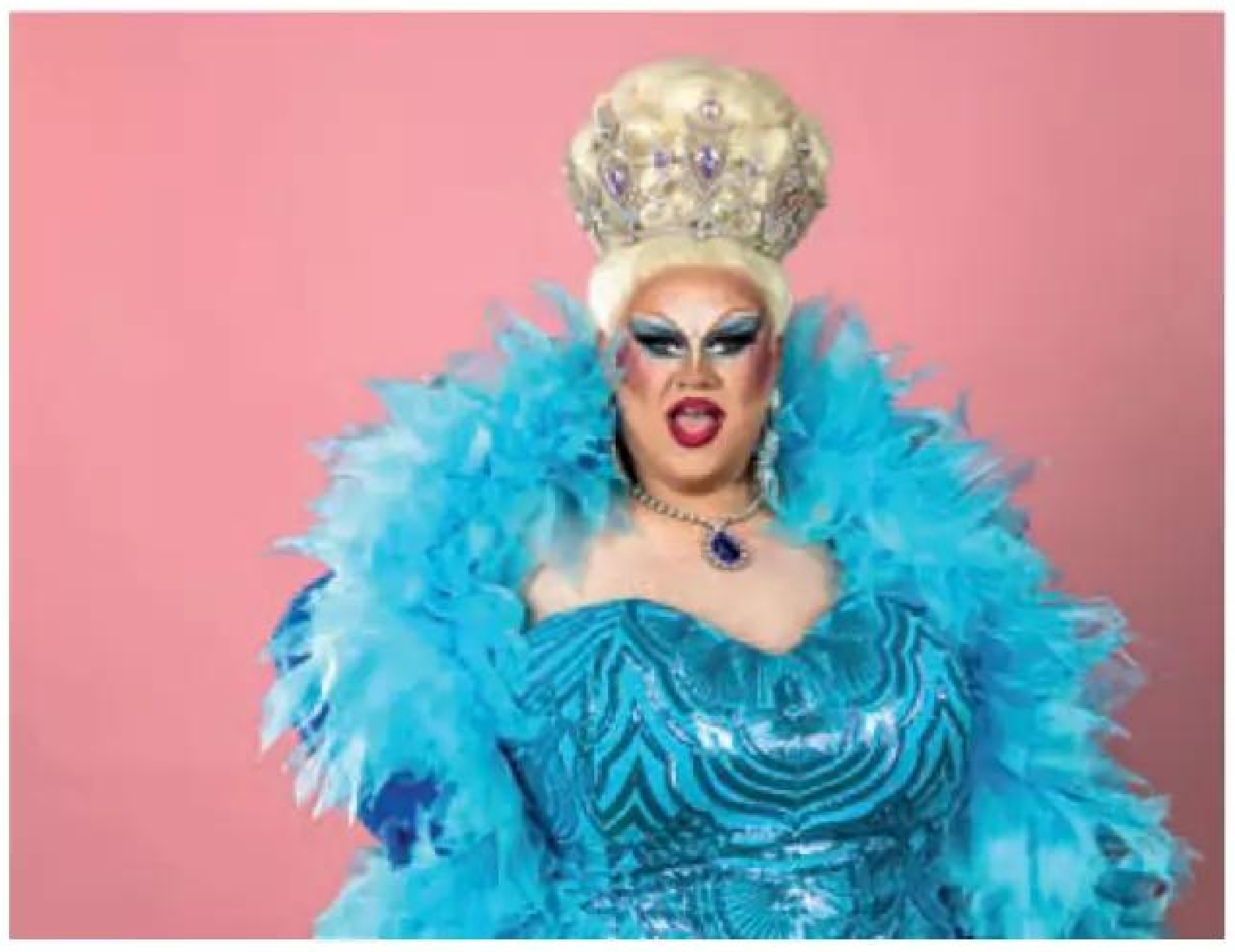
9. TERRY O'HAGAN

LIFE'S A DRAG!



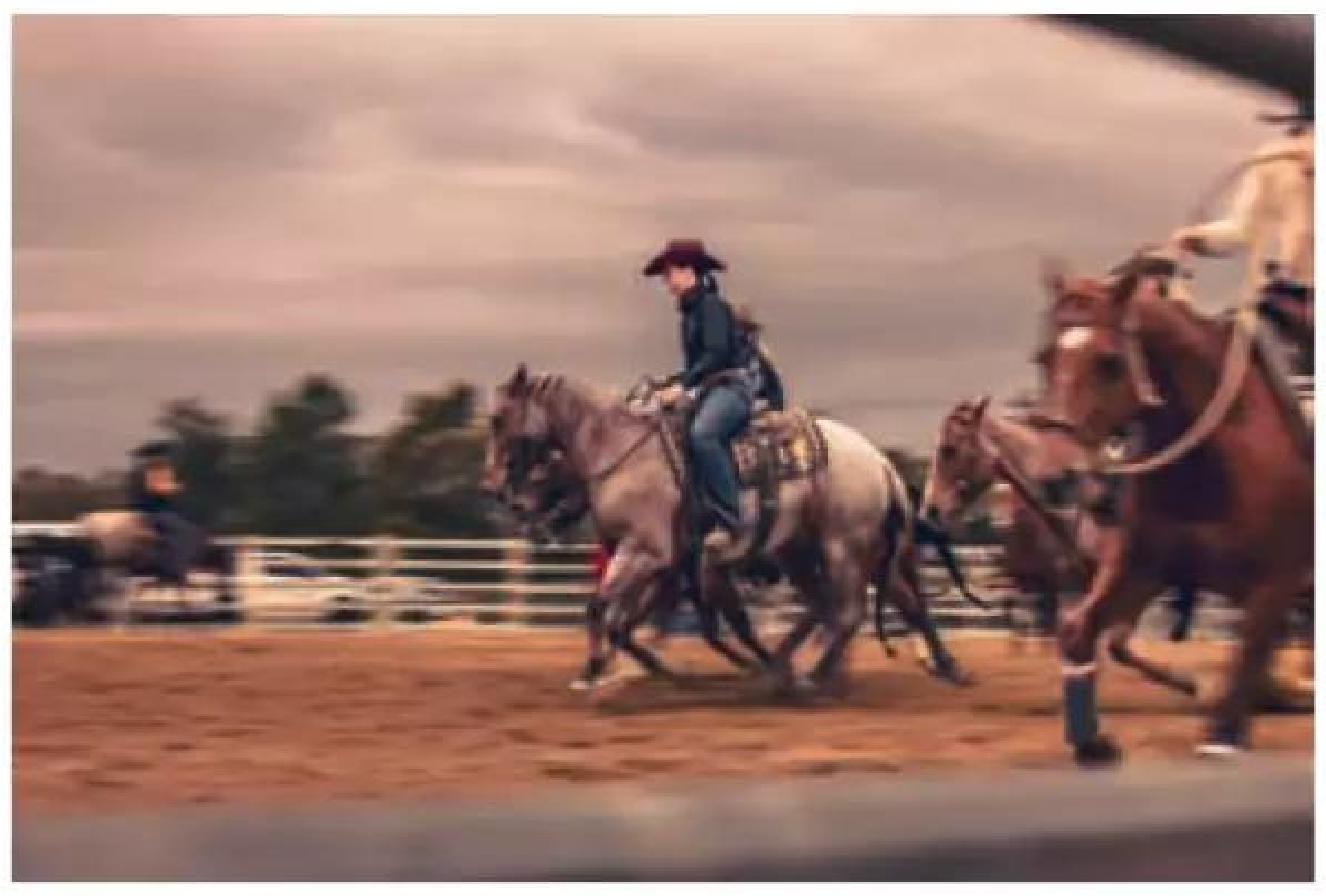


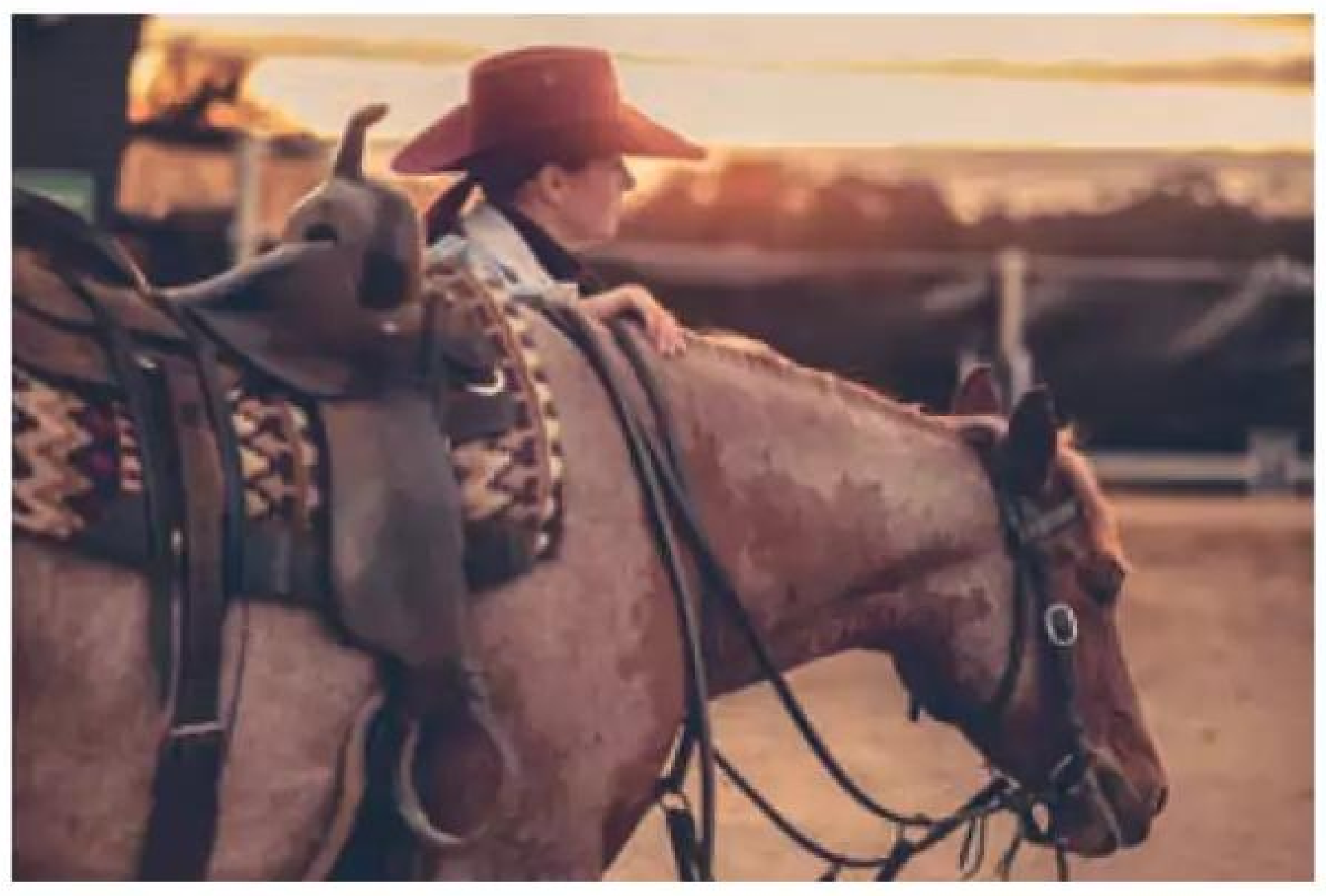


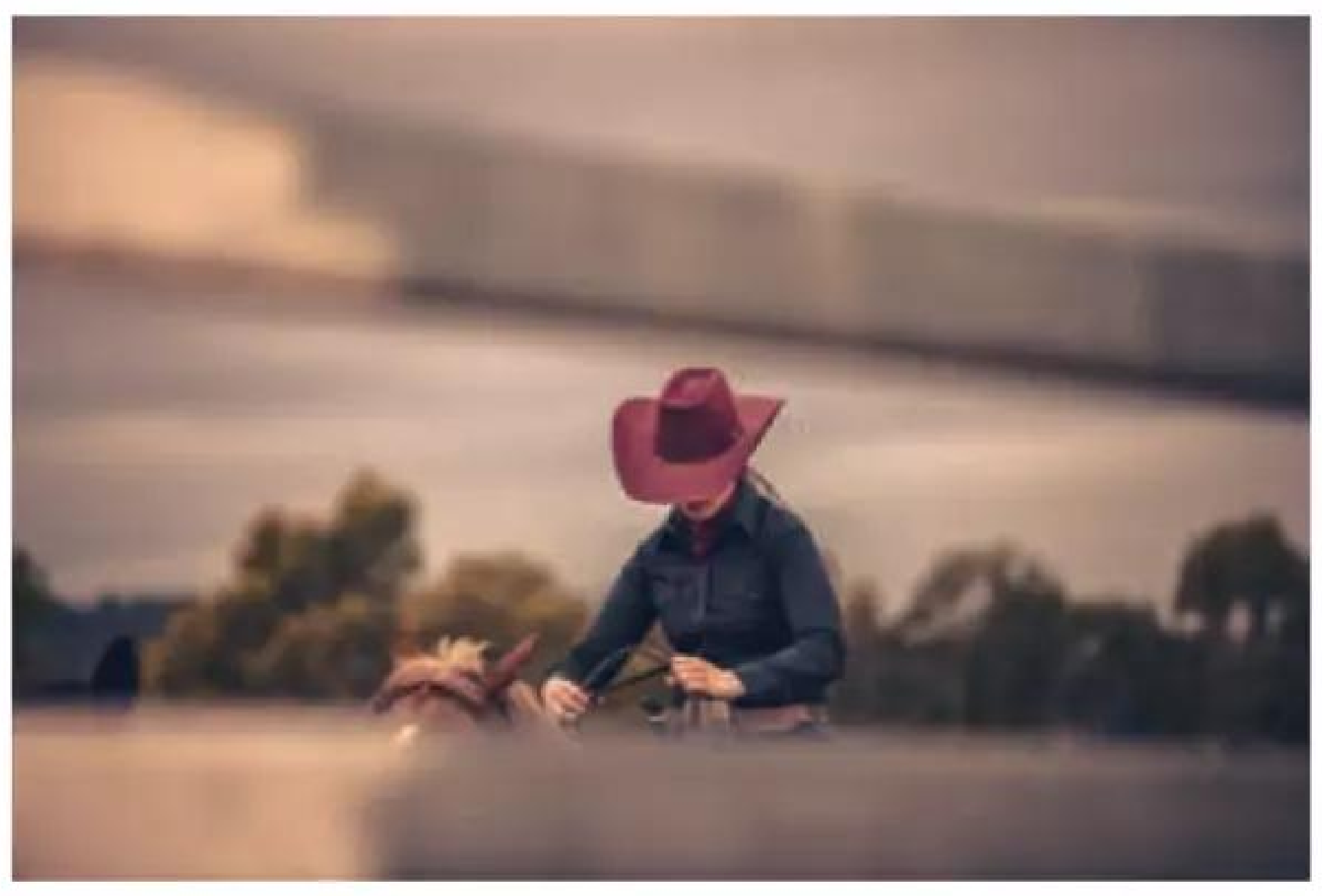


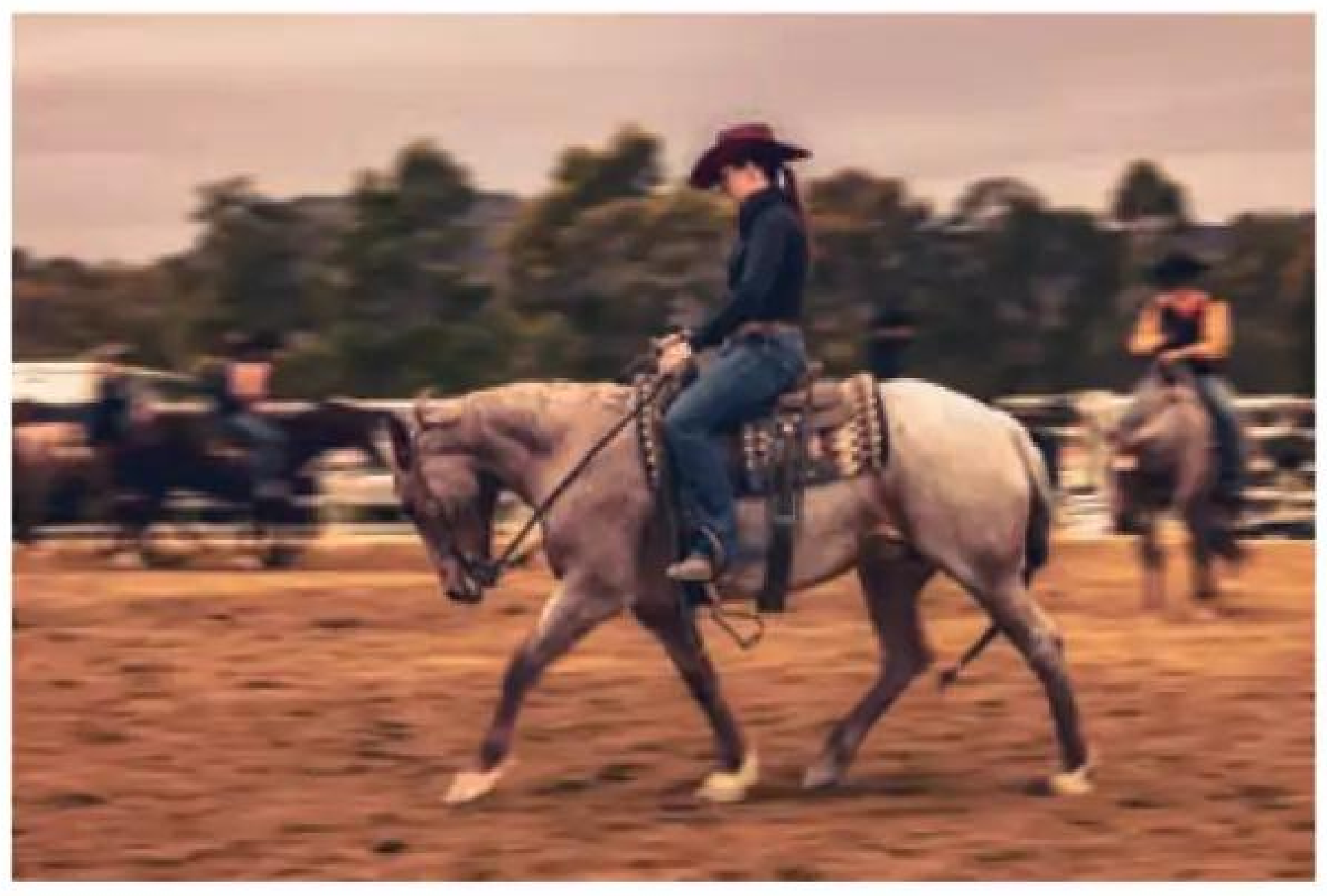
10. JACOB DEDMAN

MOMENTS IN THE YARD



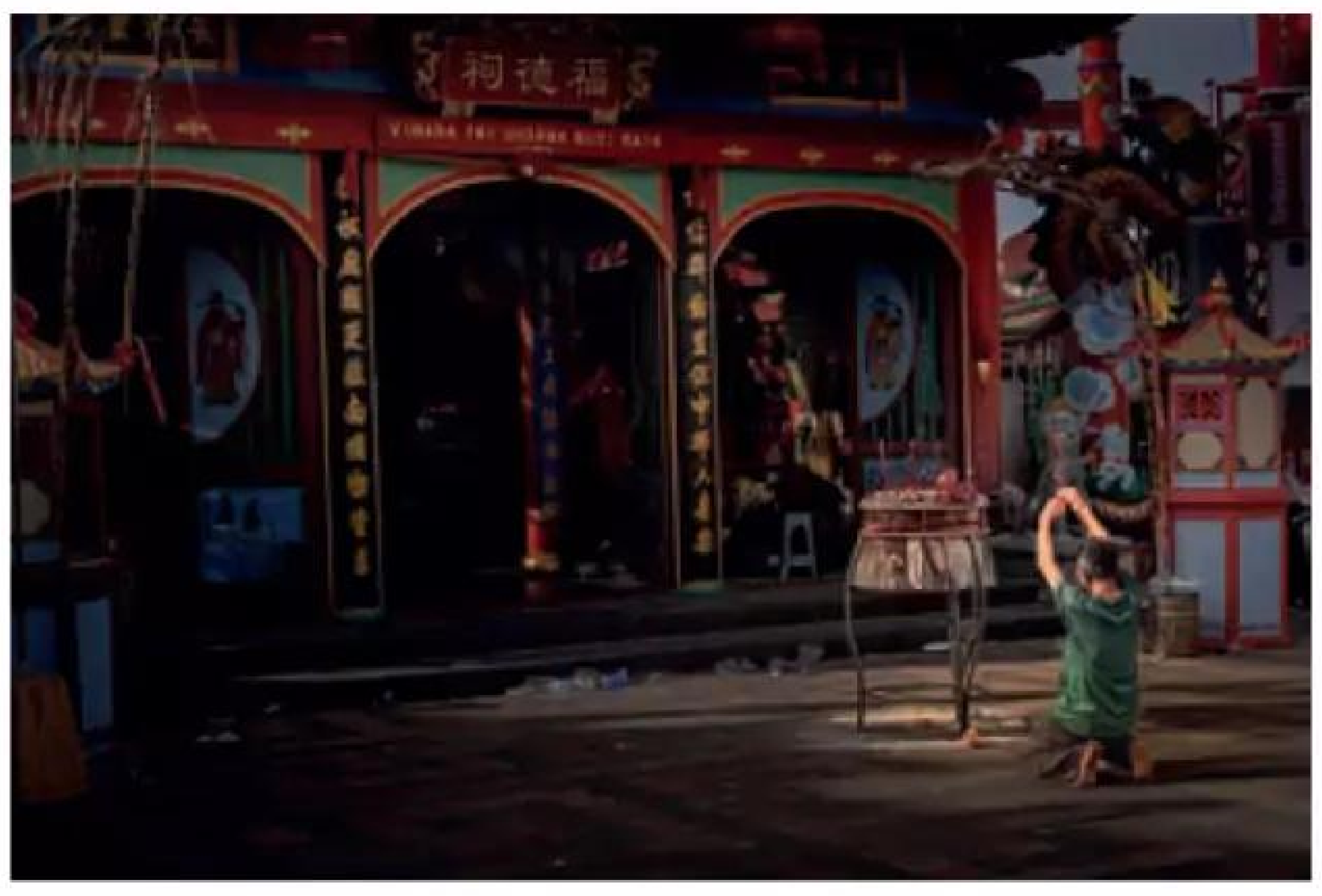


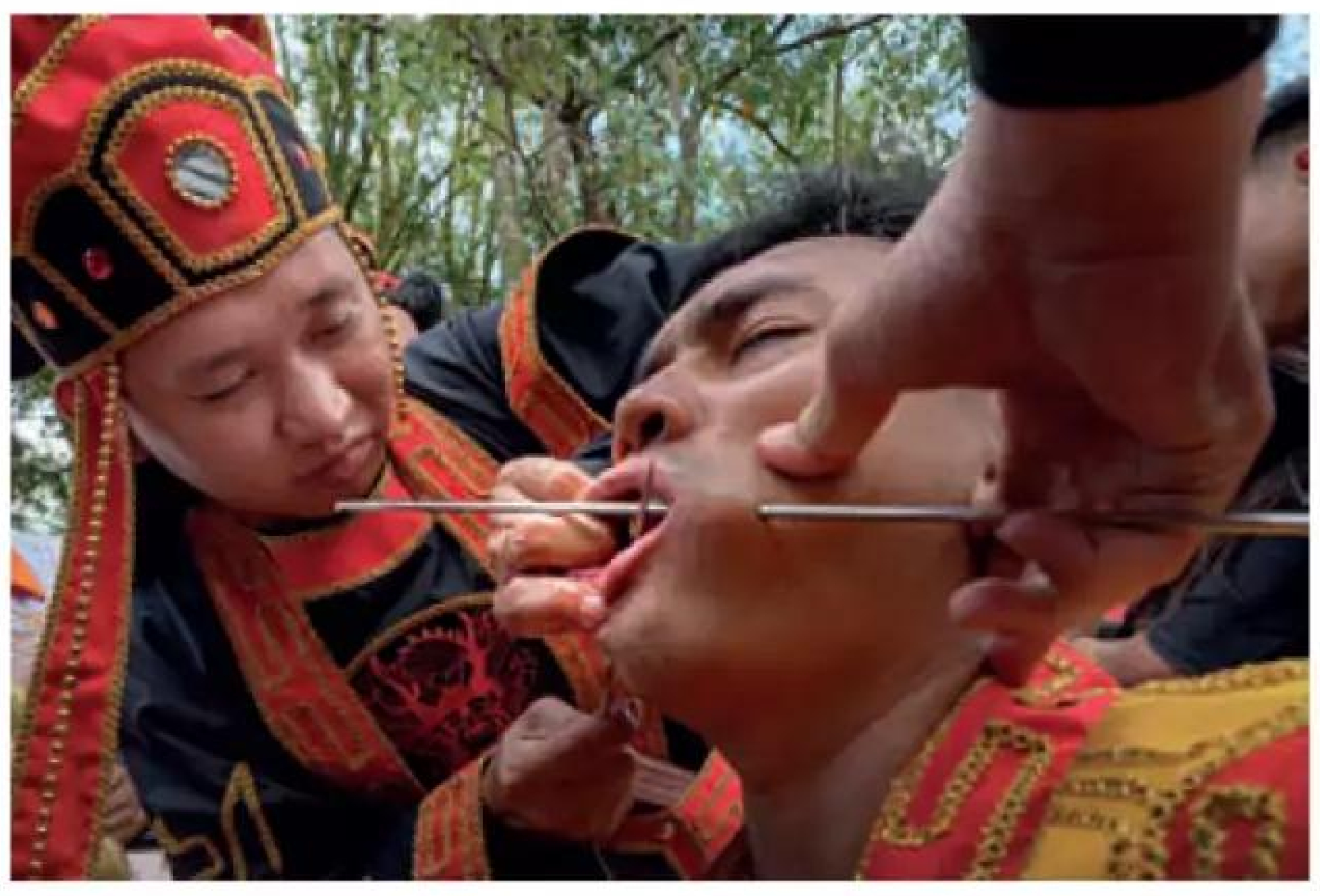


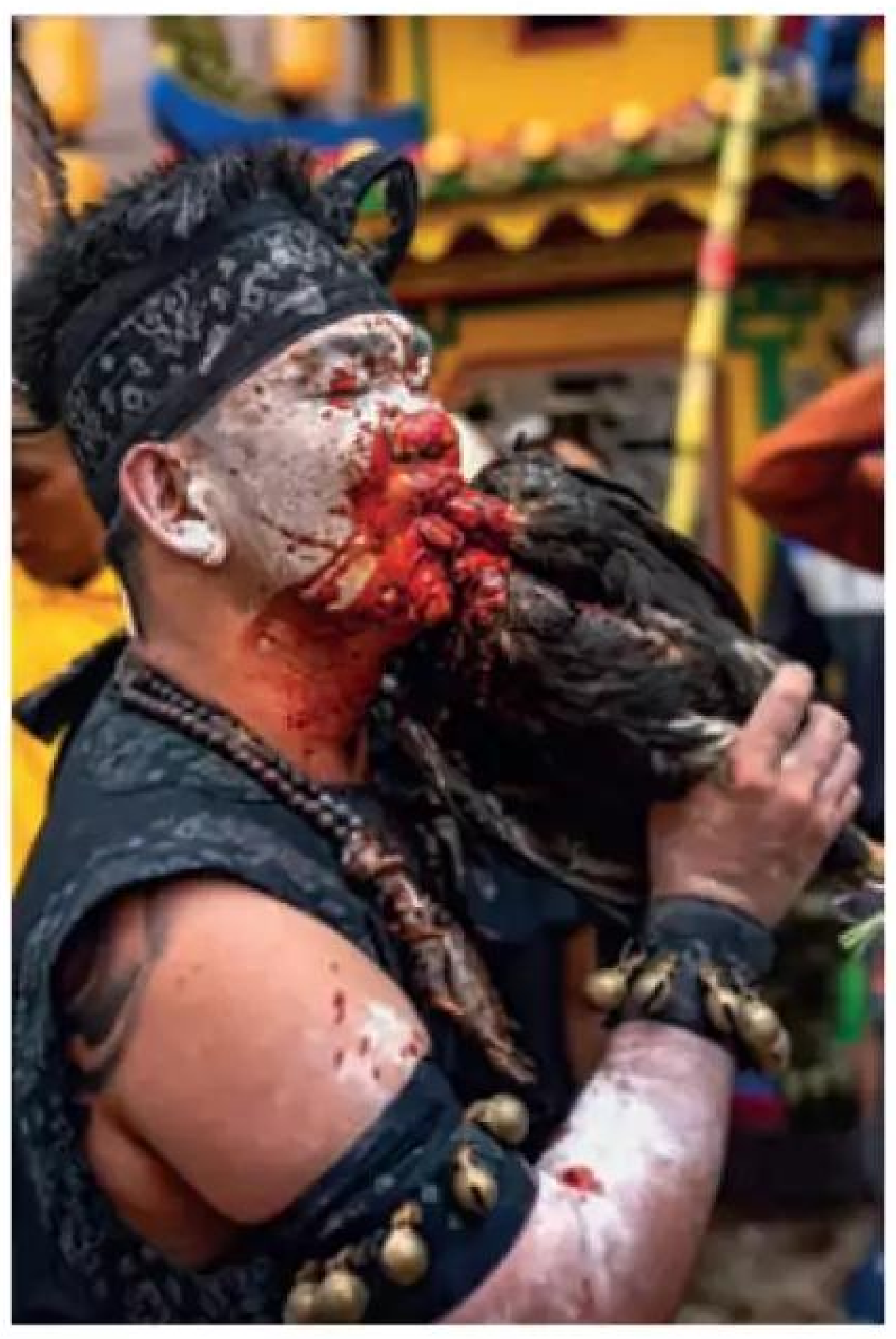


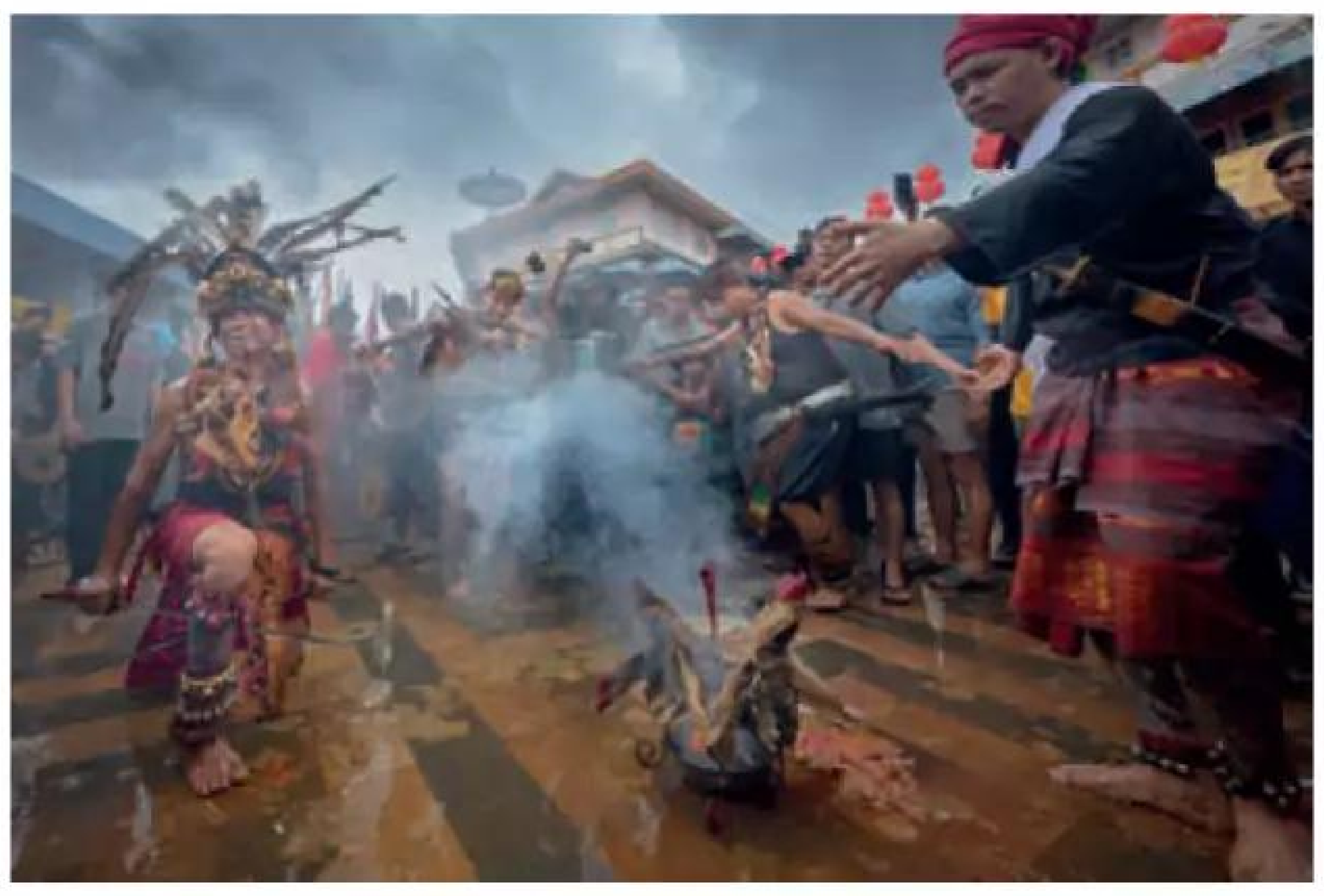
11. DONALD CHIN

SINGKAWANG'S SPIRIT FESTIVAL



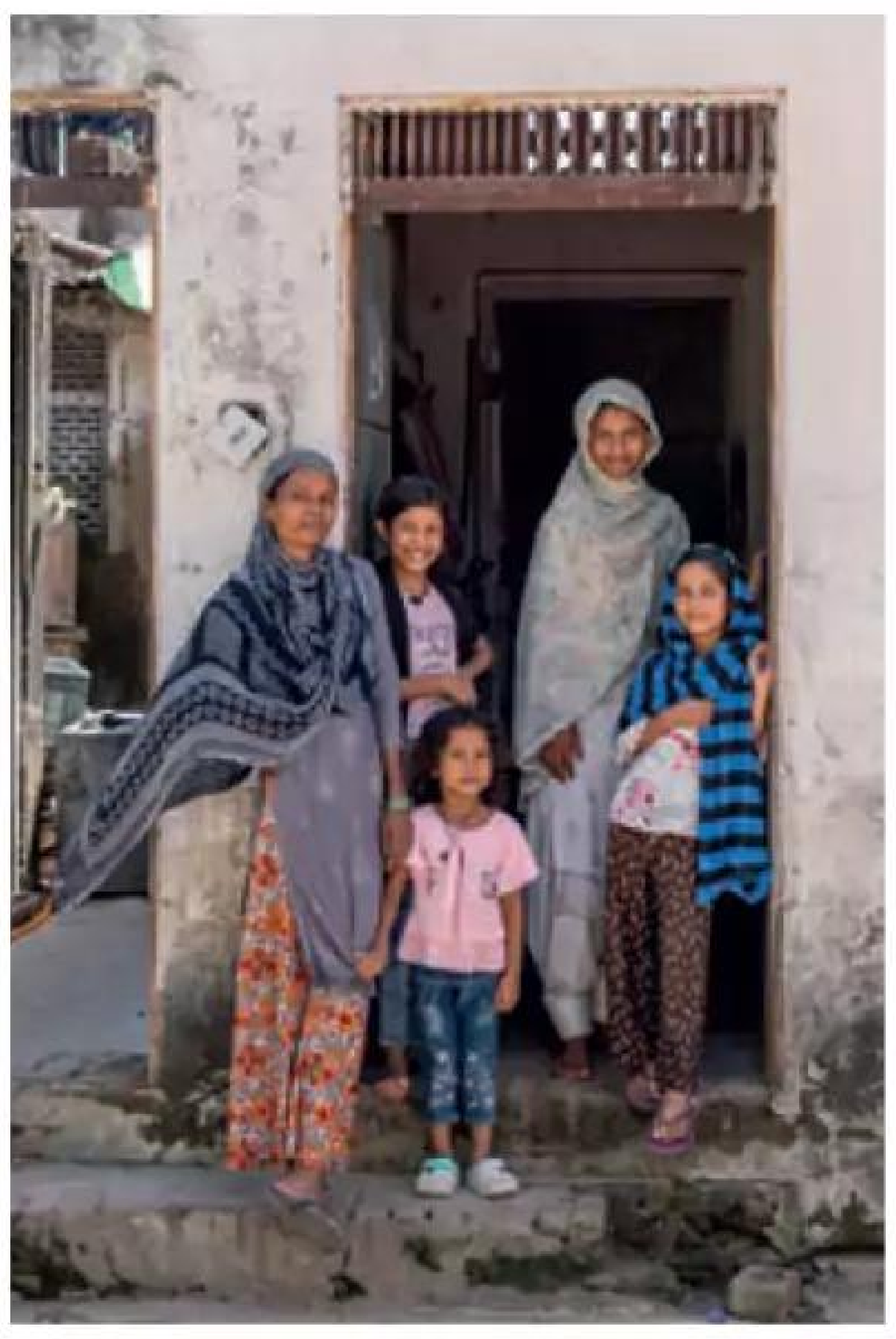


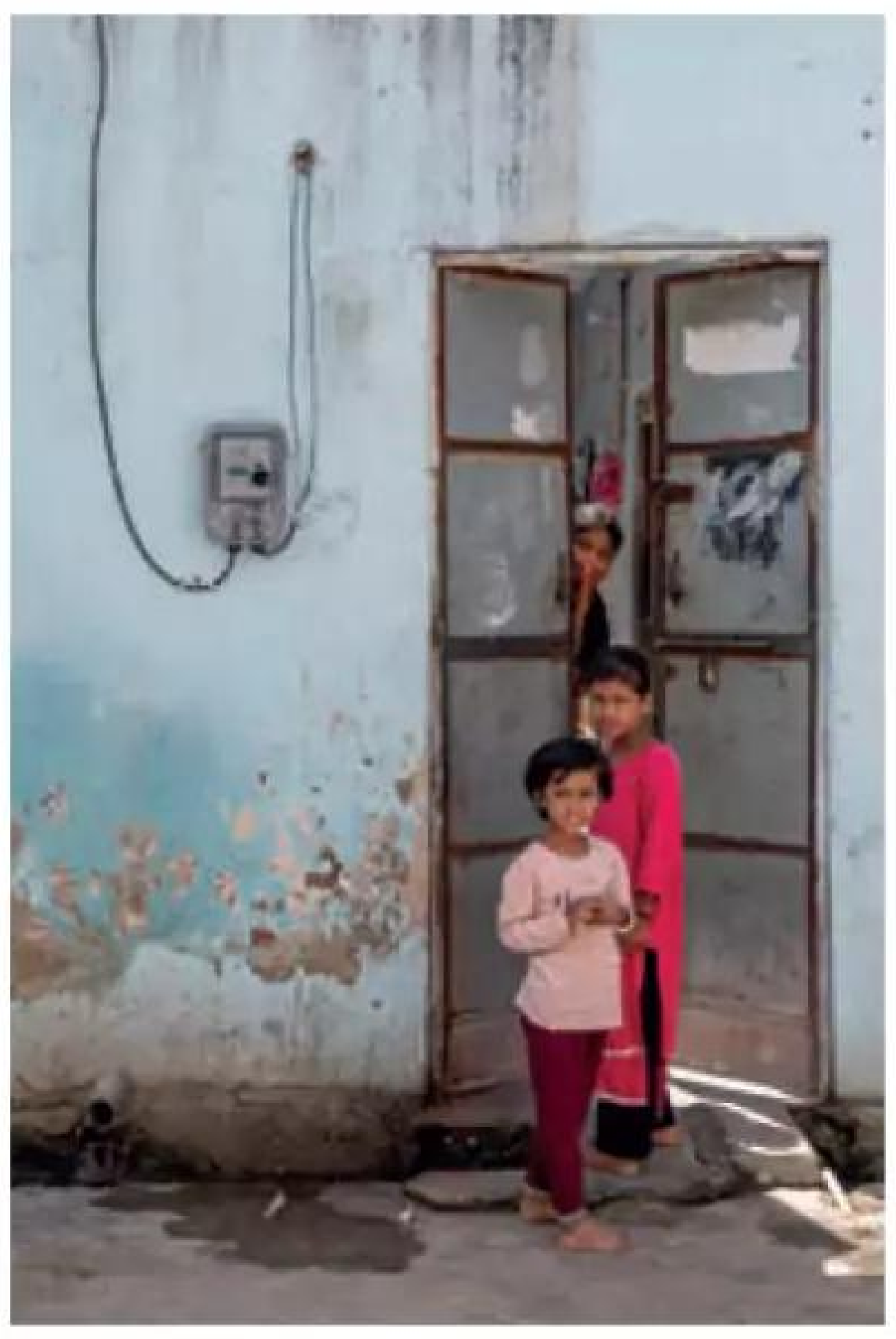


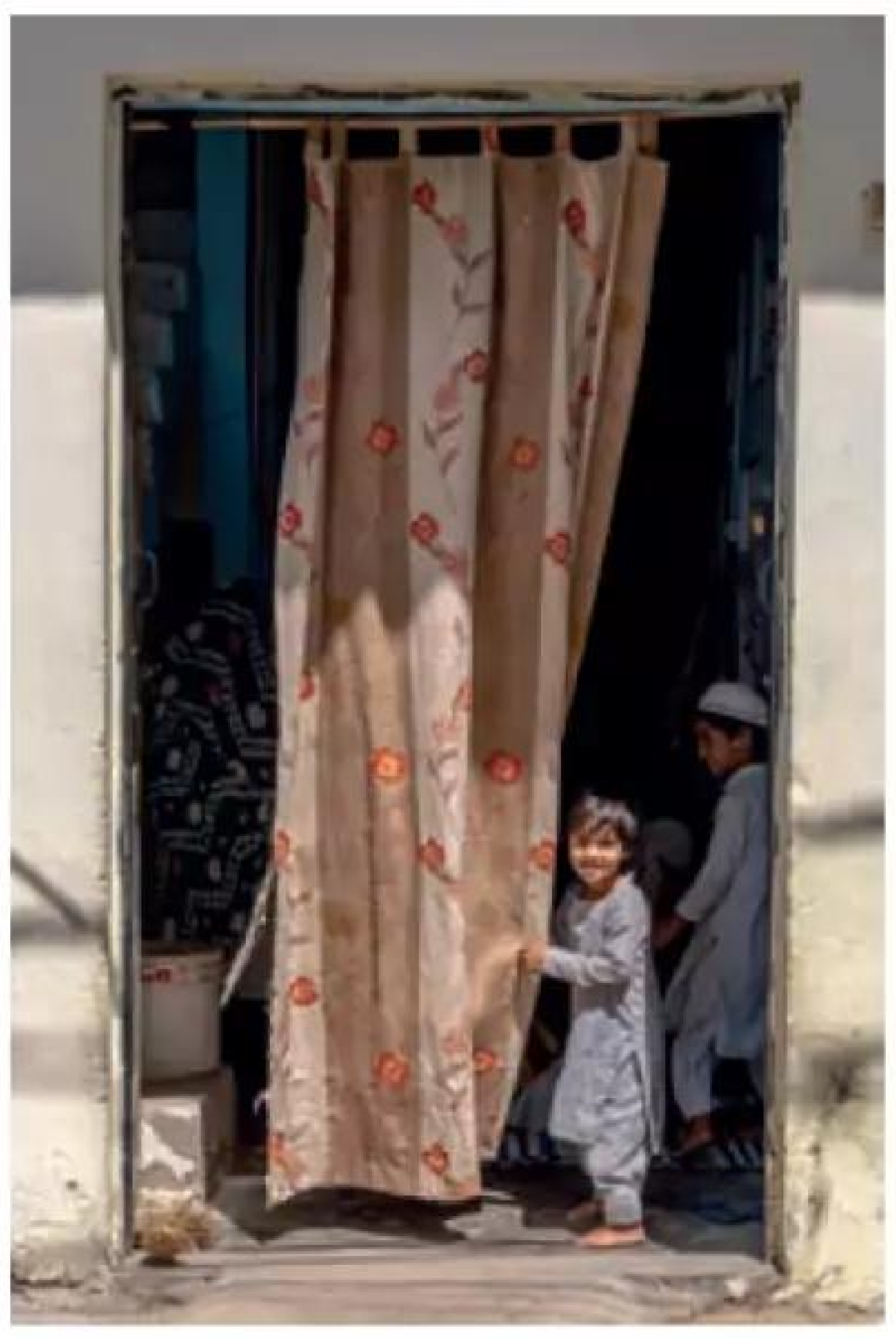


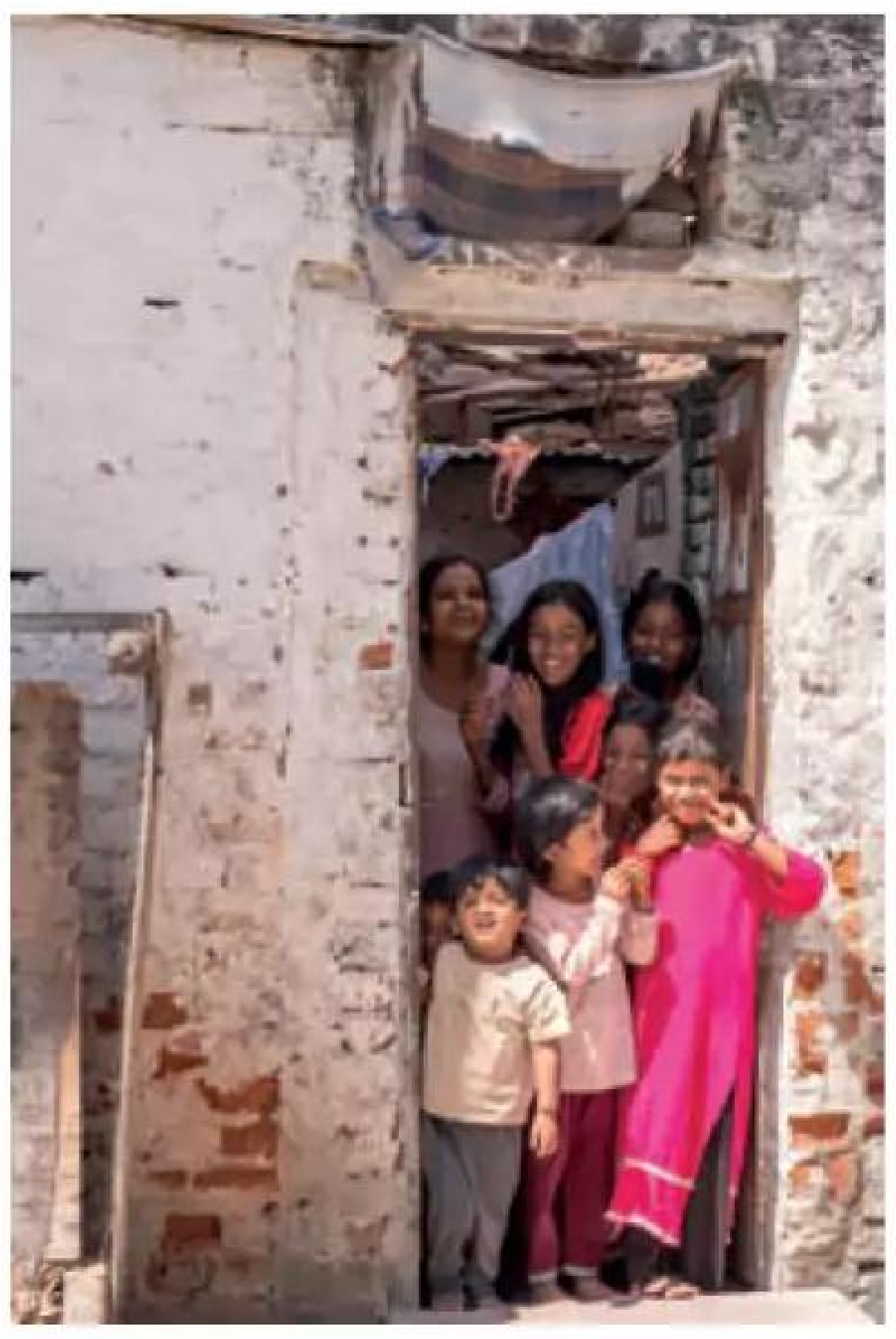
12. KIMBERLY GROUNDS

THE CURIOUS AND FRIENDLY FACES OF JAIPUR



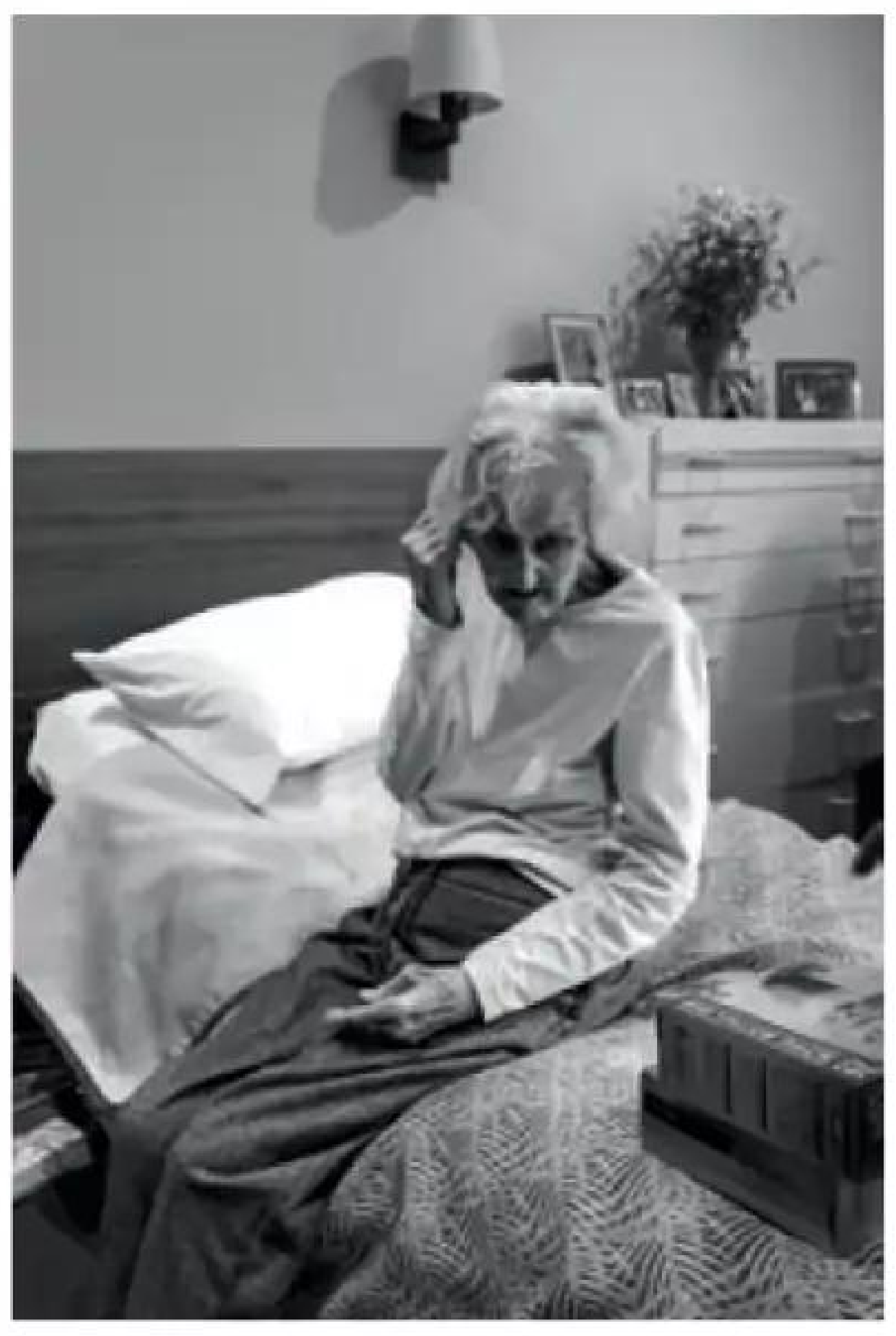


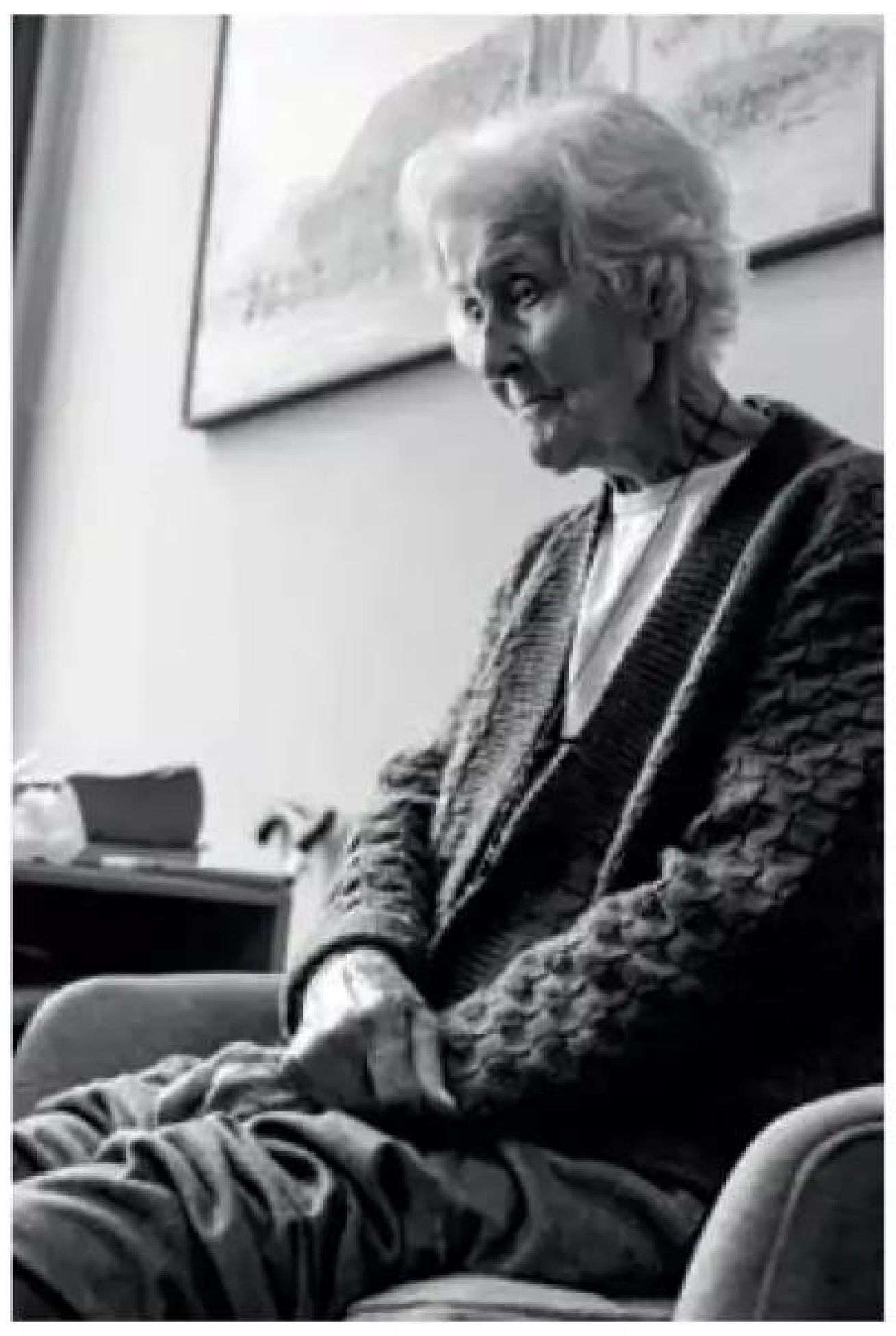


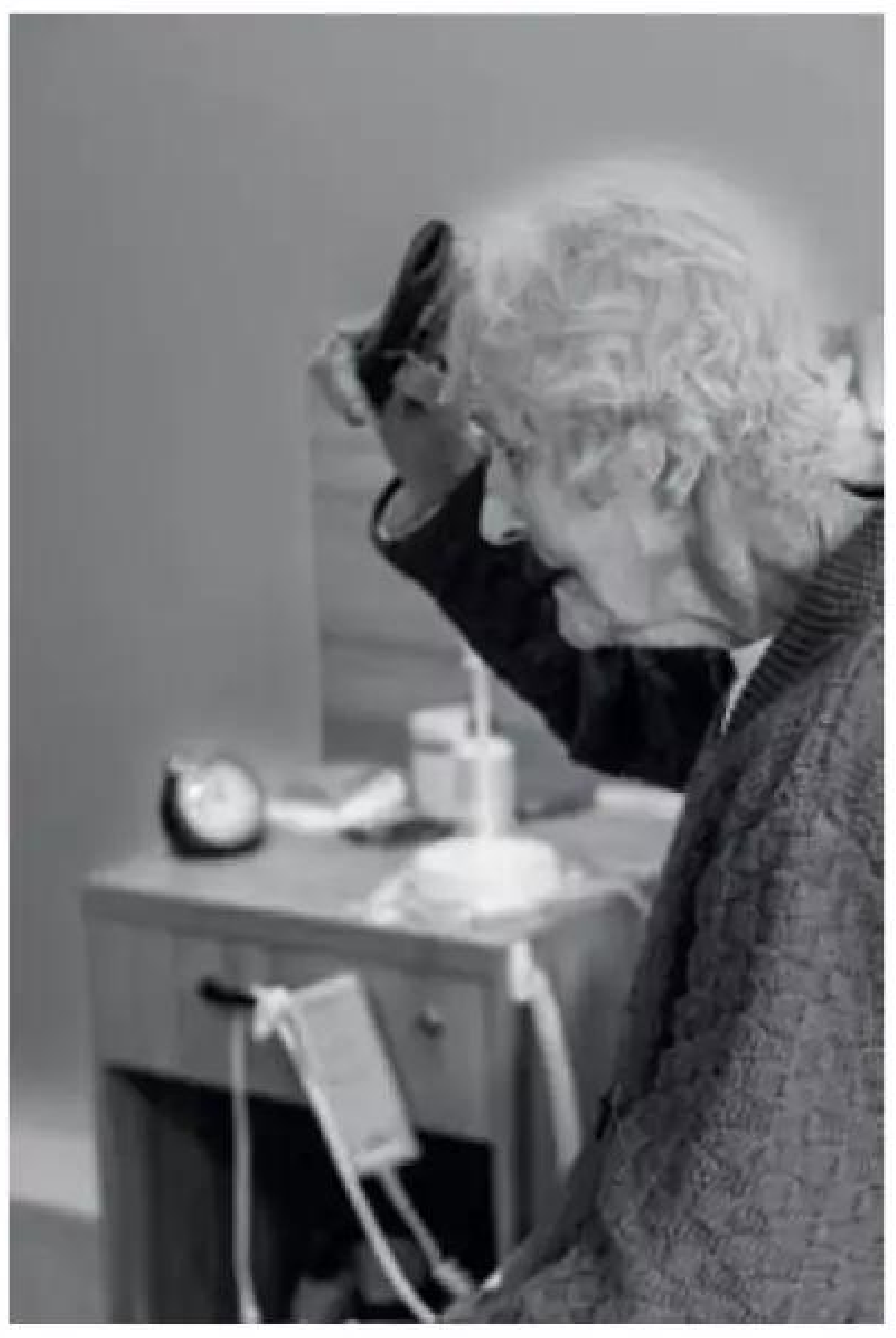


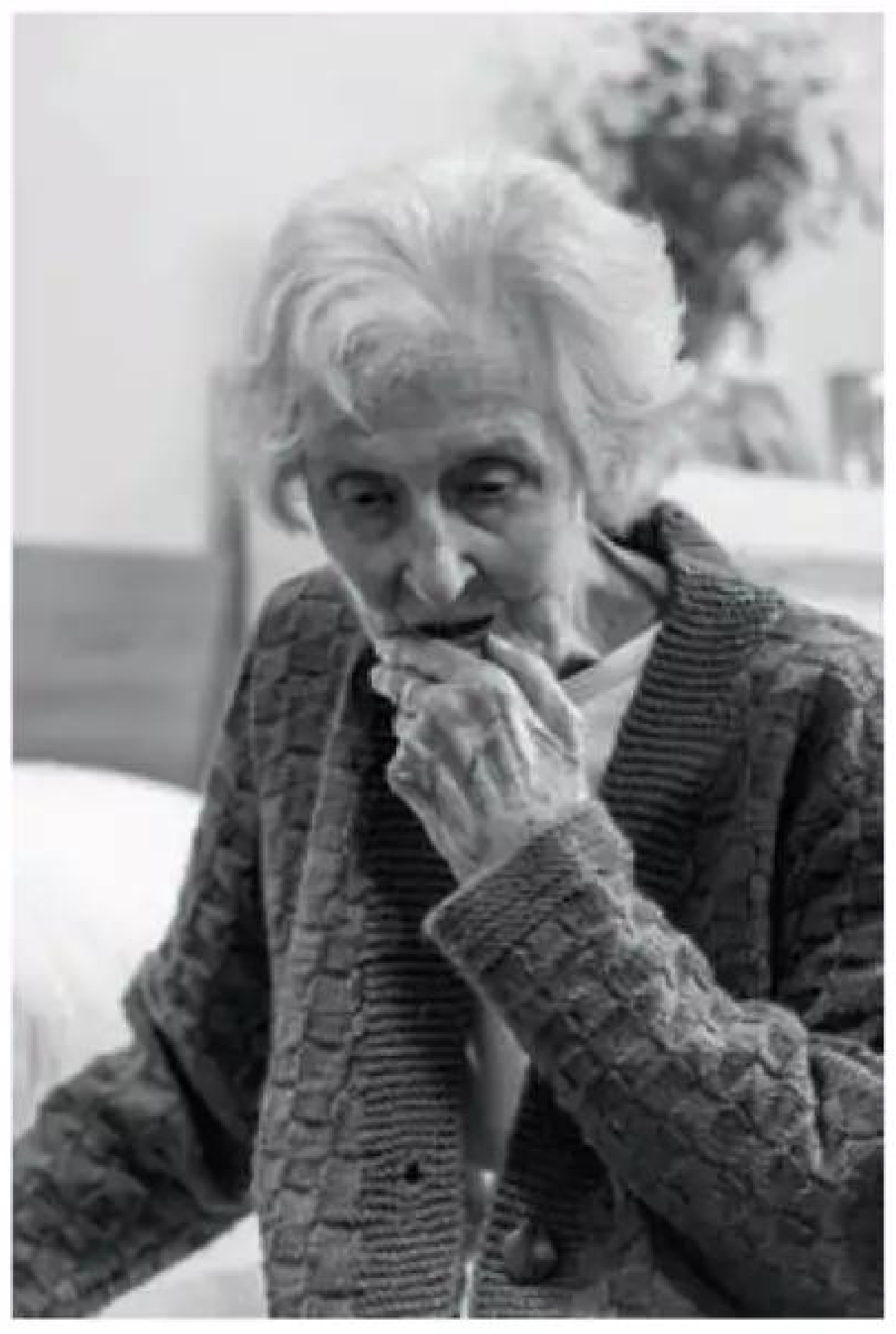
13. LAURA CRIMMINS

THE QUIET KNOWING



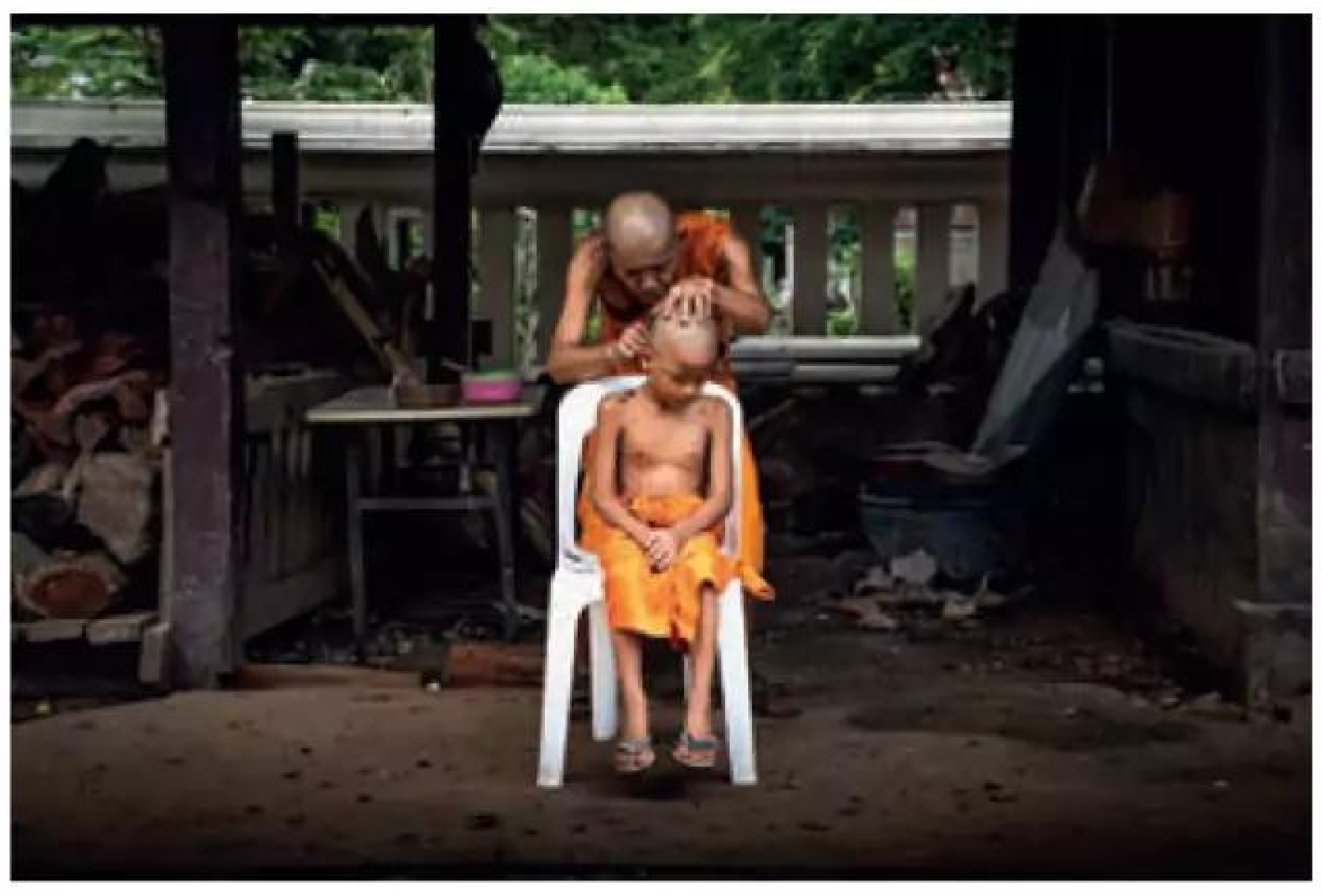


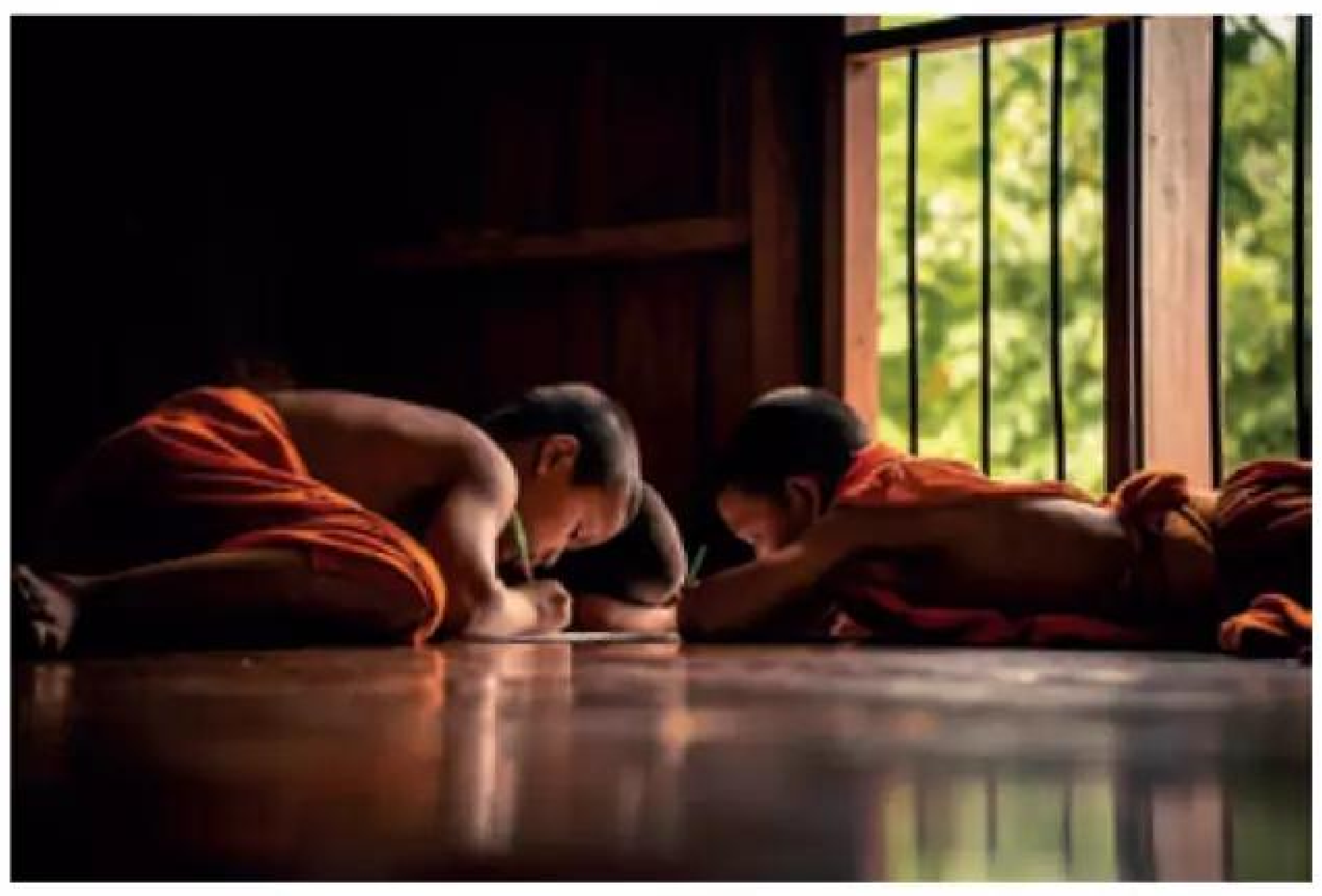


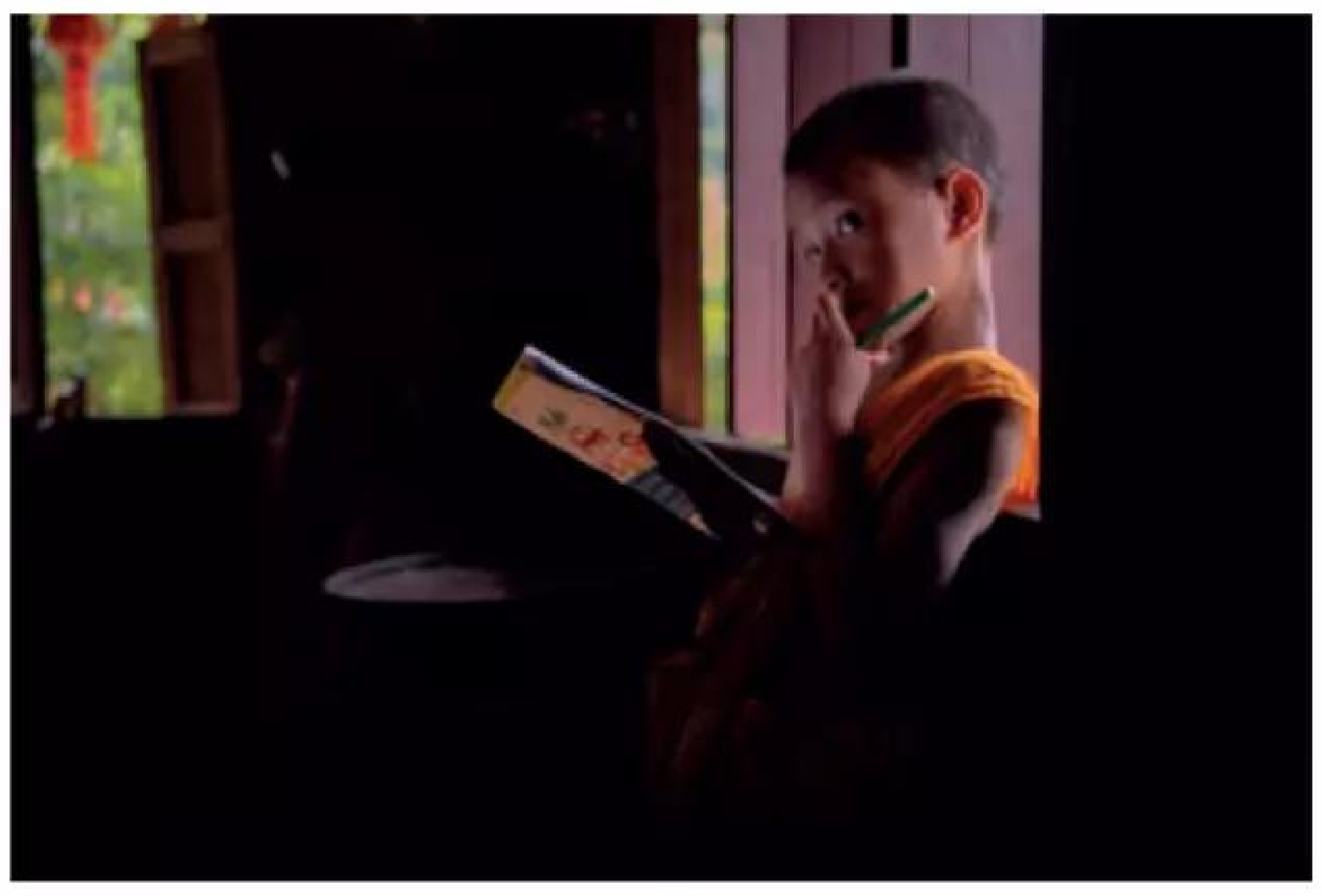


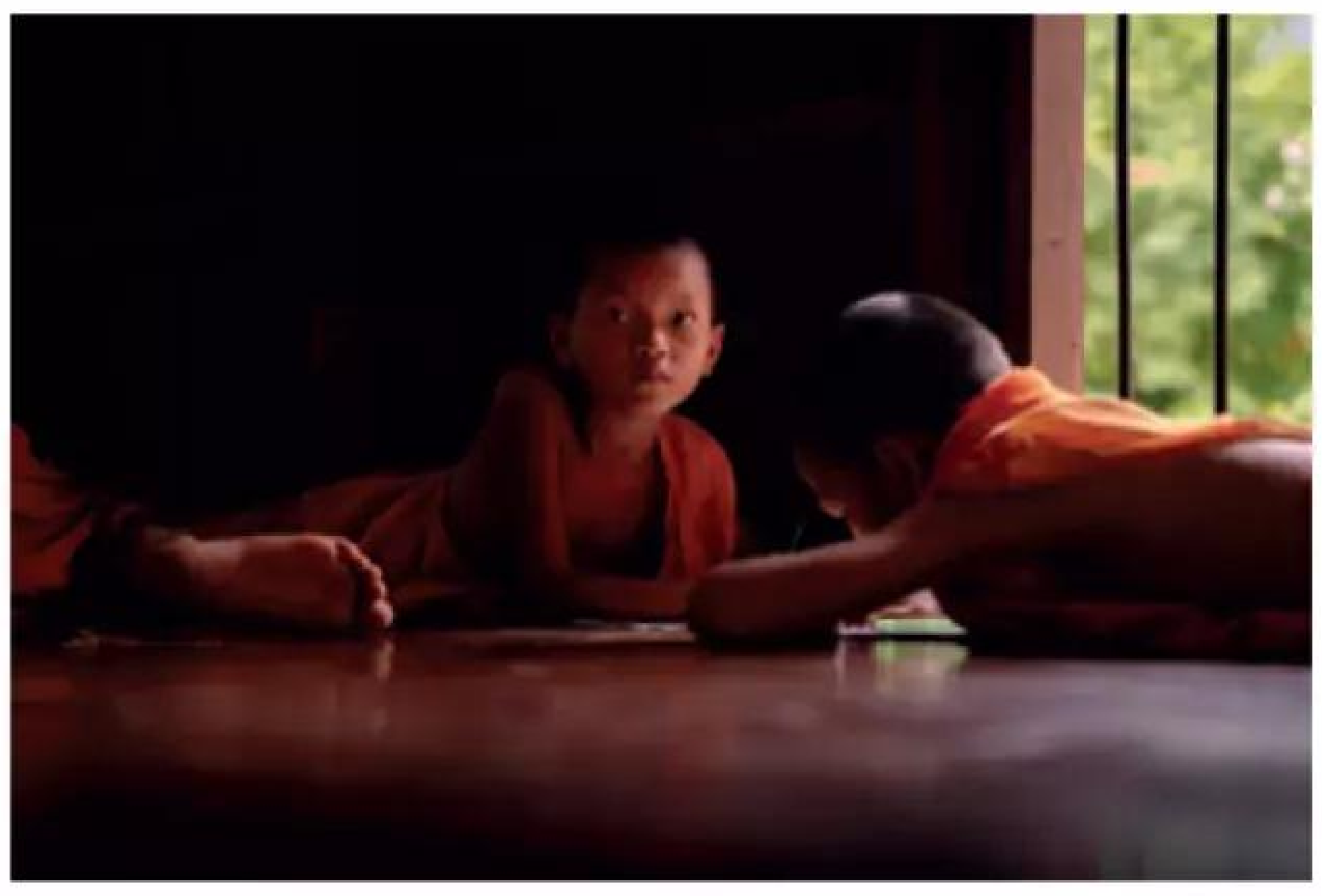
14. LODI PERTOVT

BOYHOOD



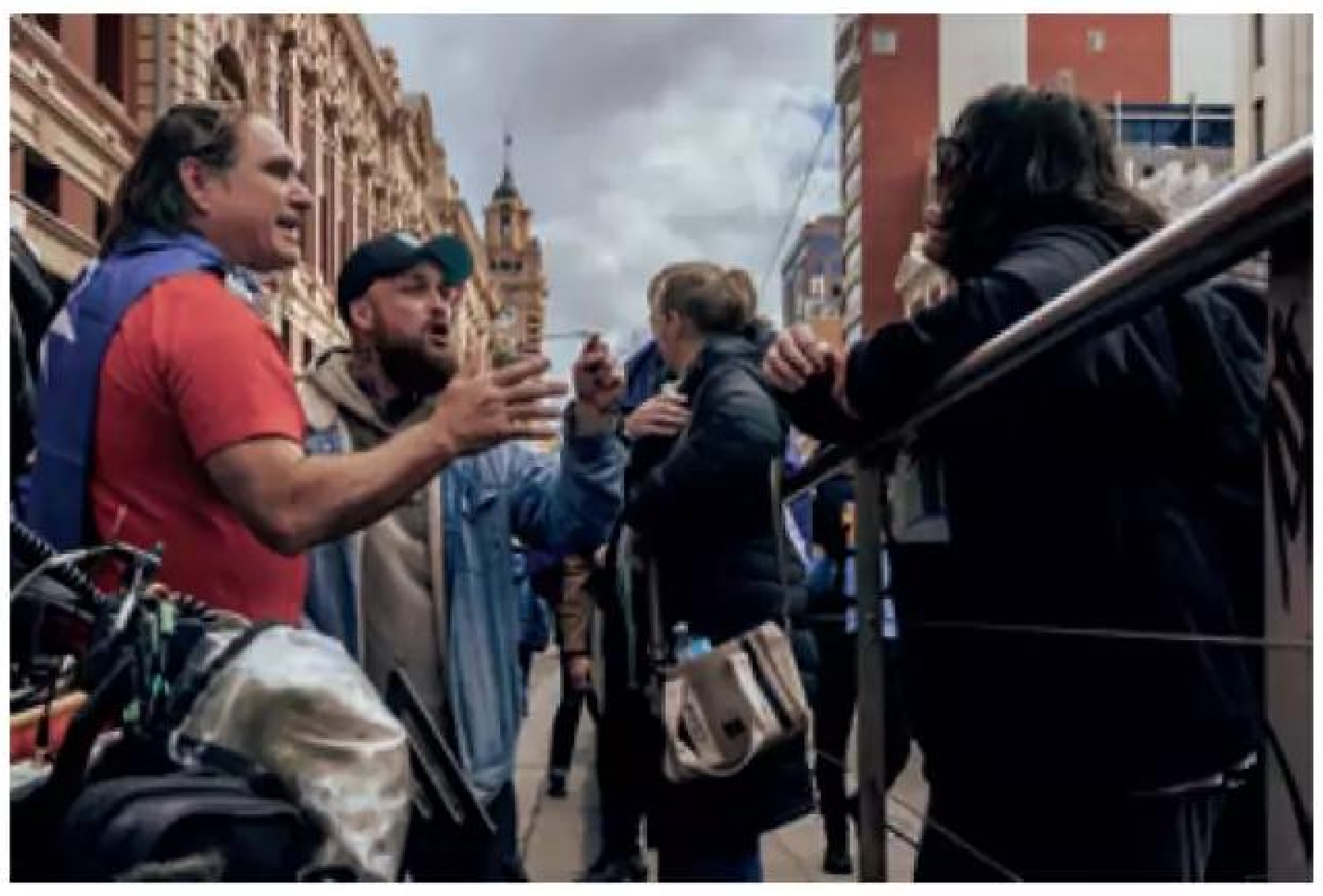


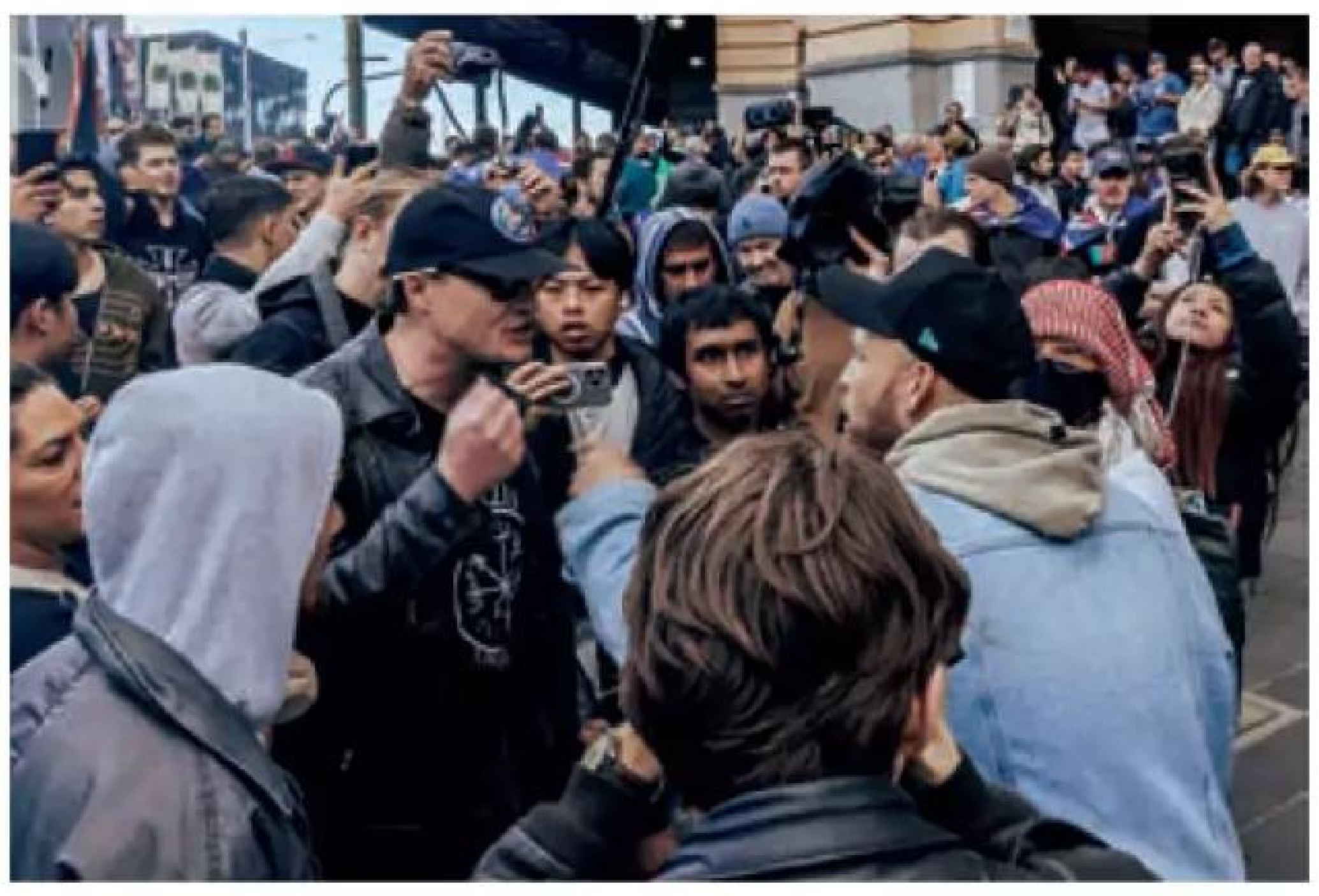


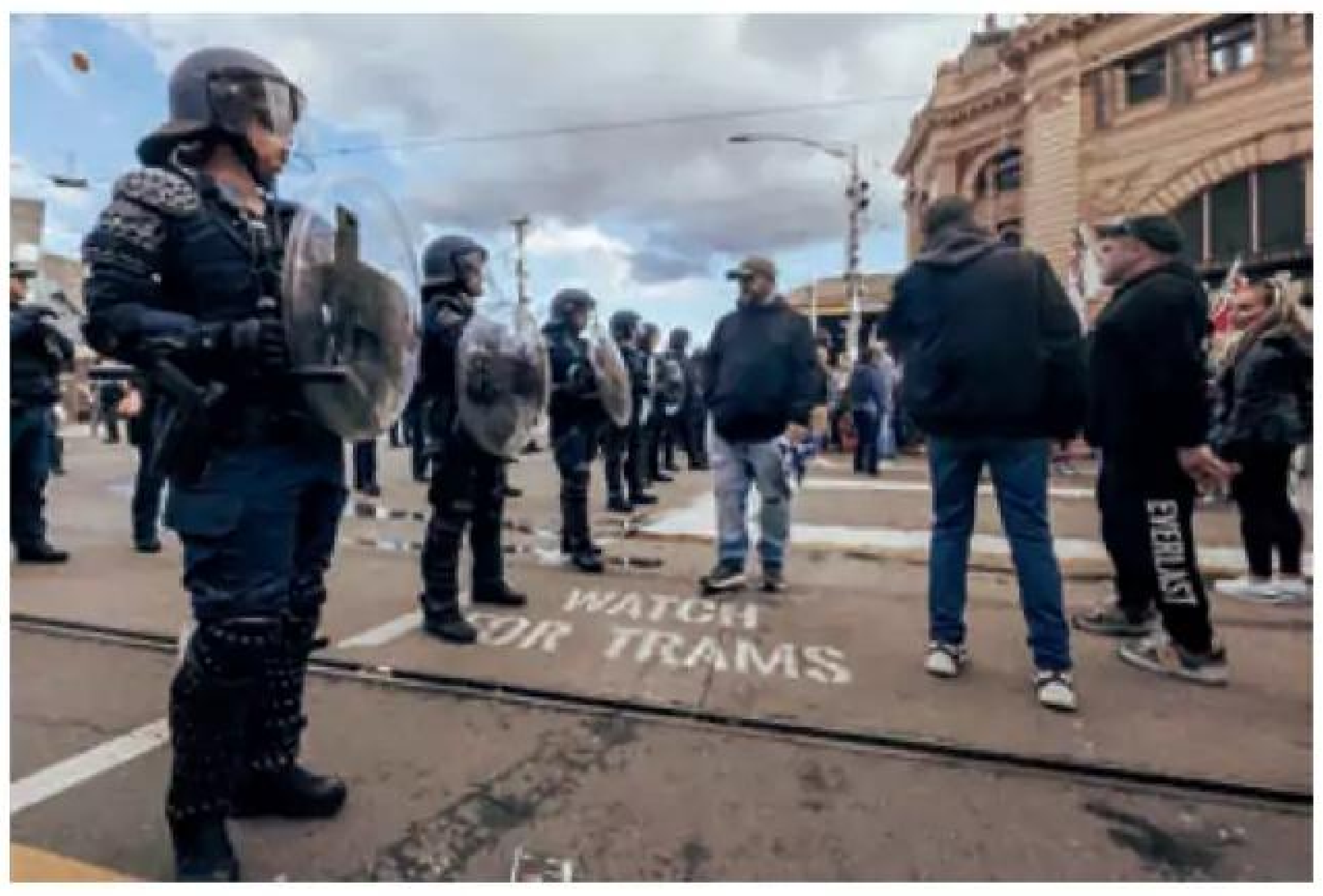


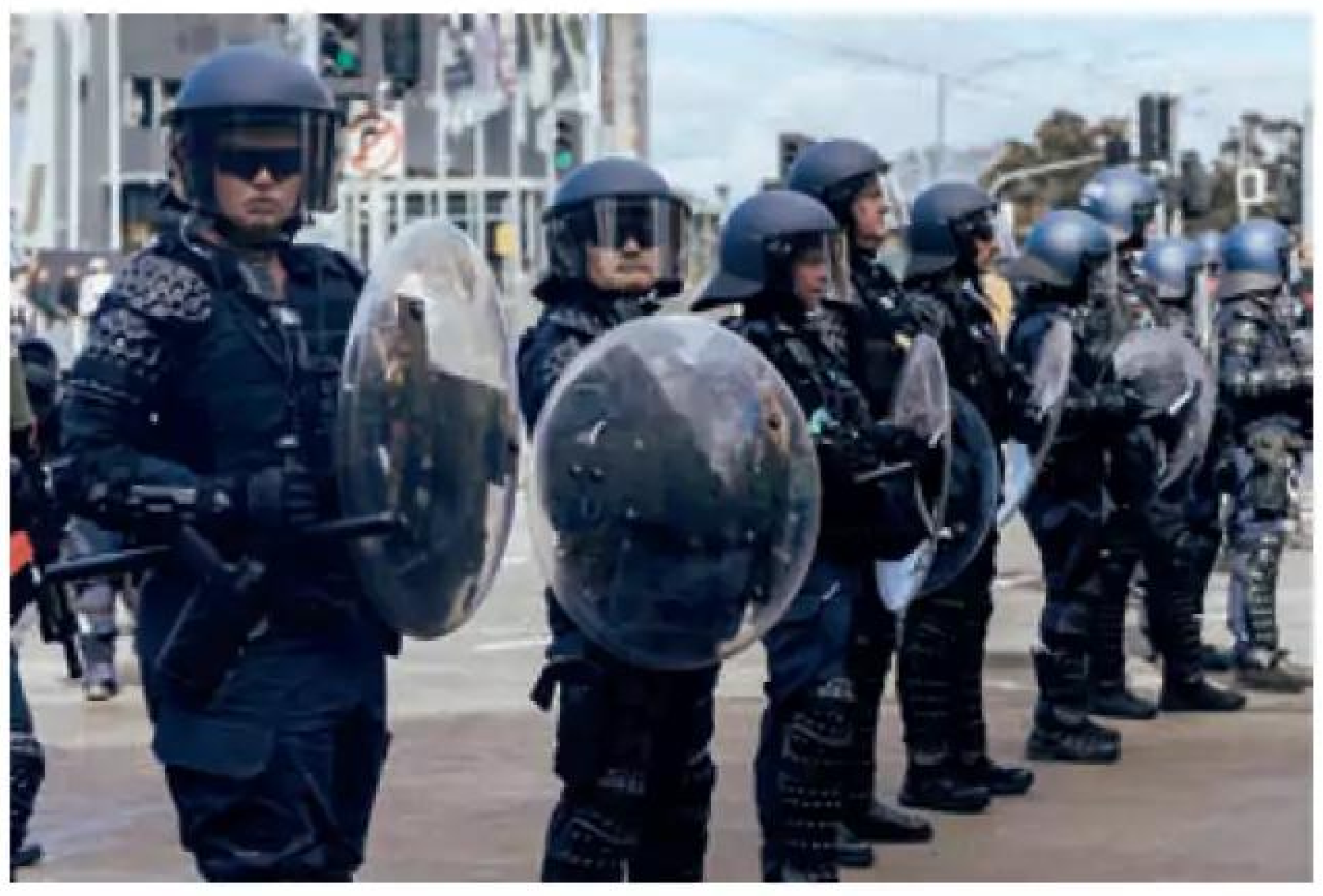
15. KIM TALENTO

LINES OF DIVISION



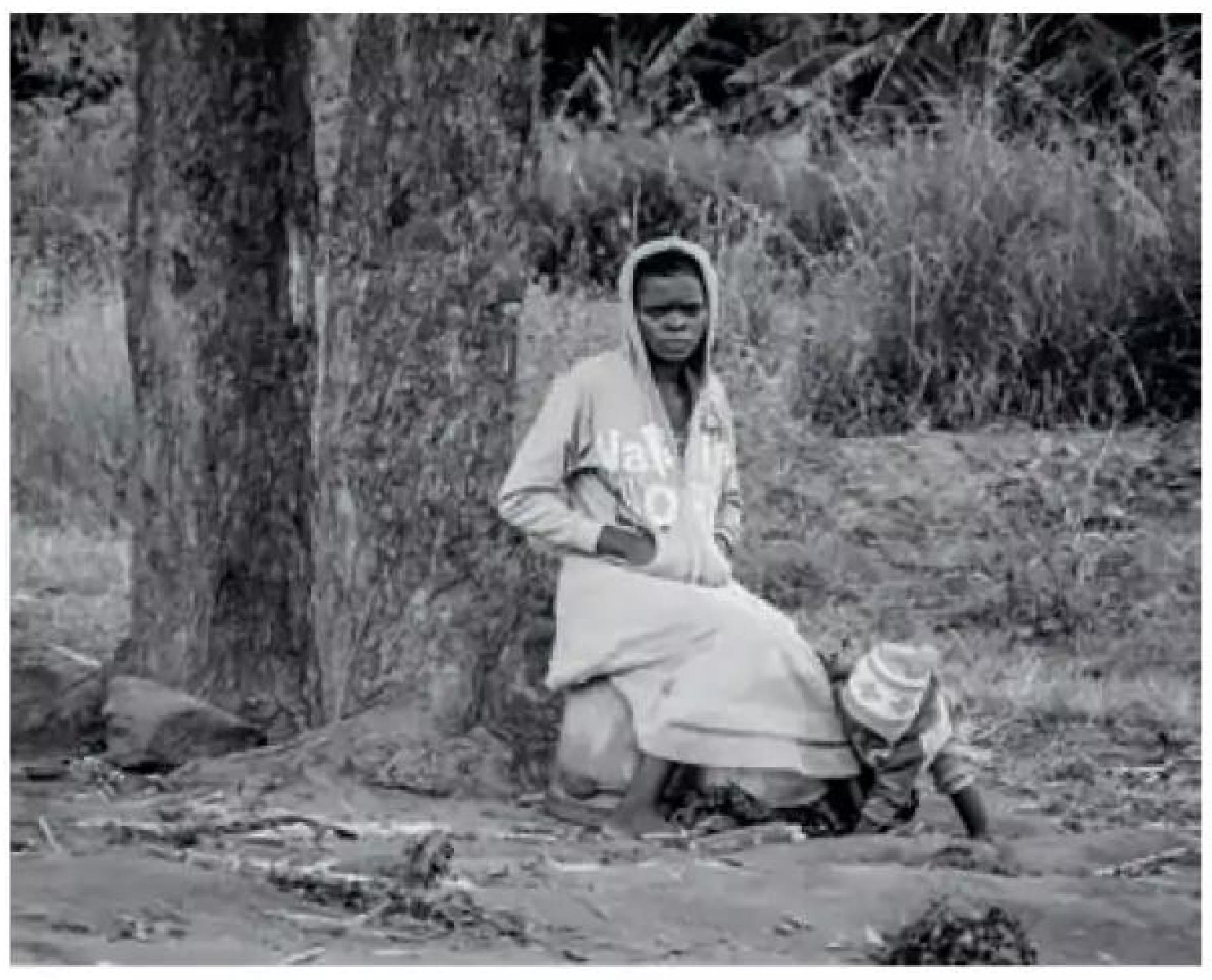


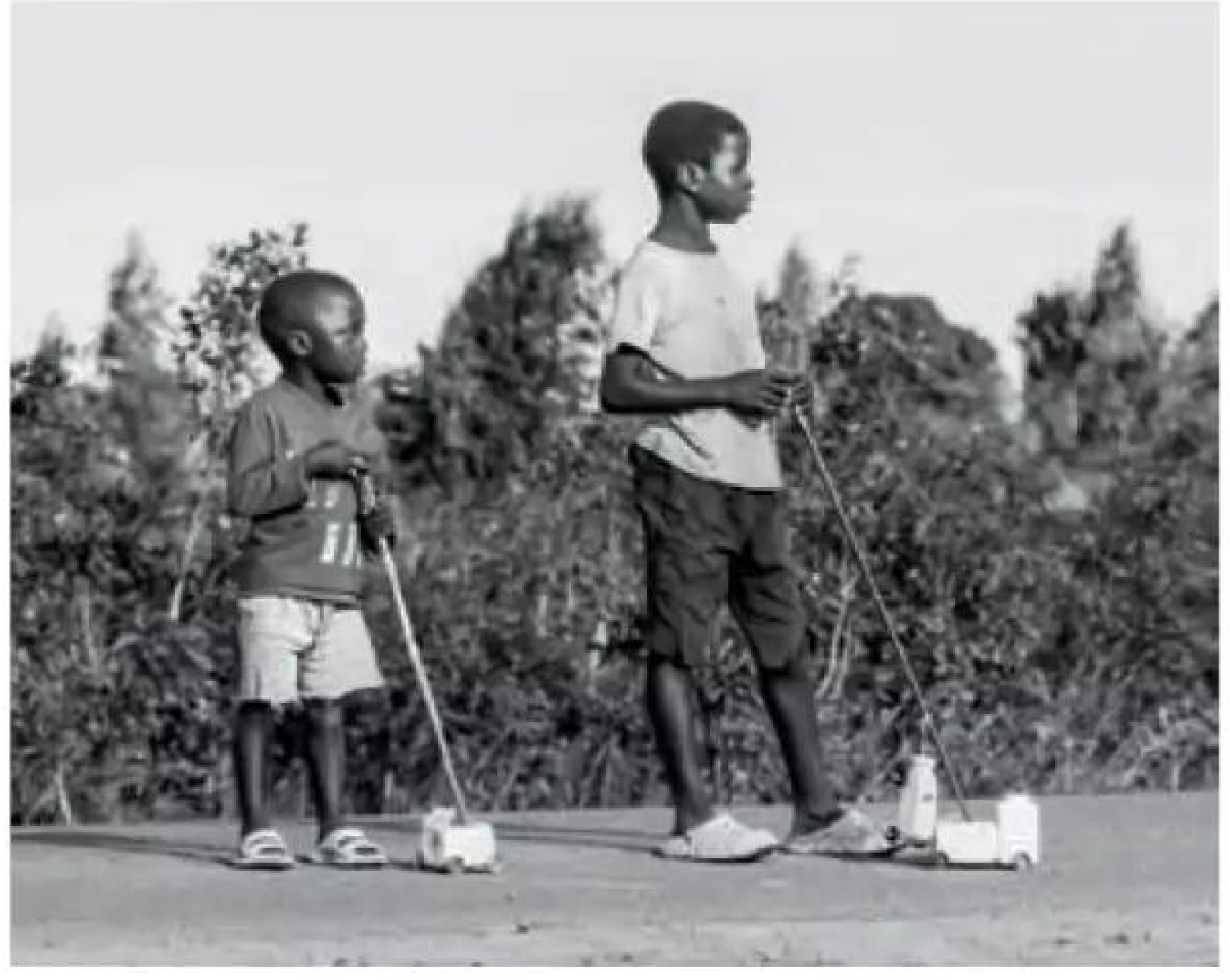

WATCH FOR TRAMS

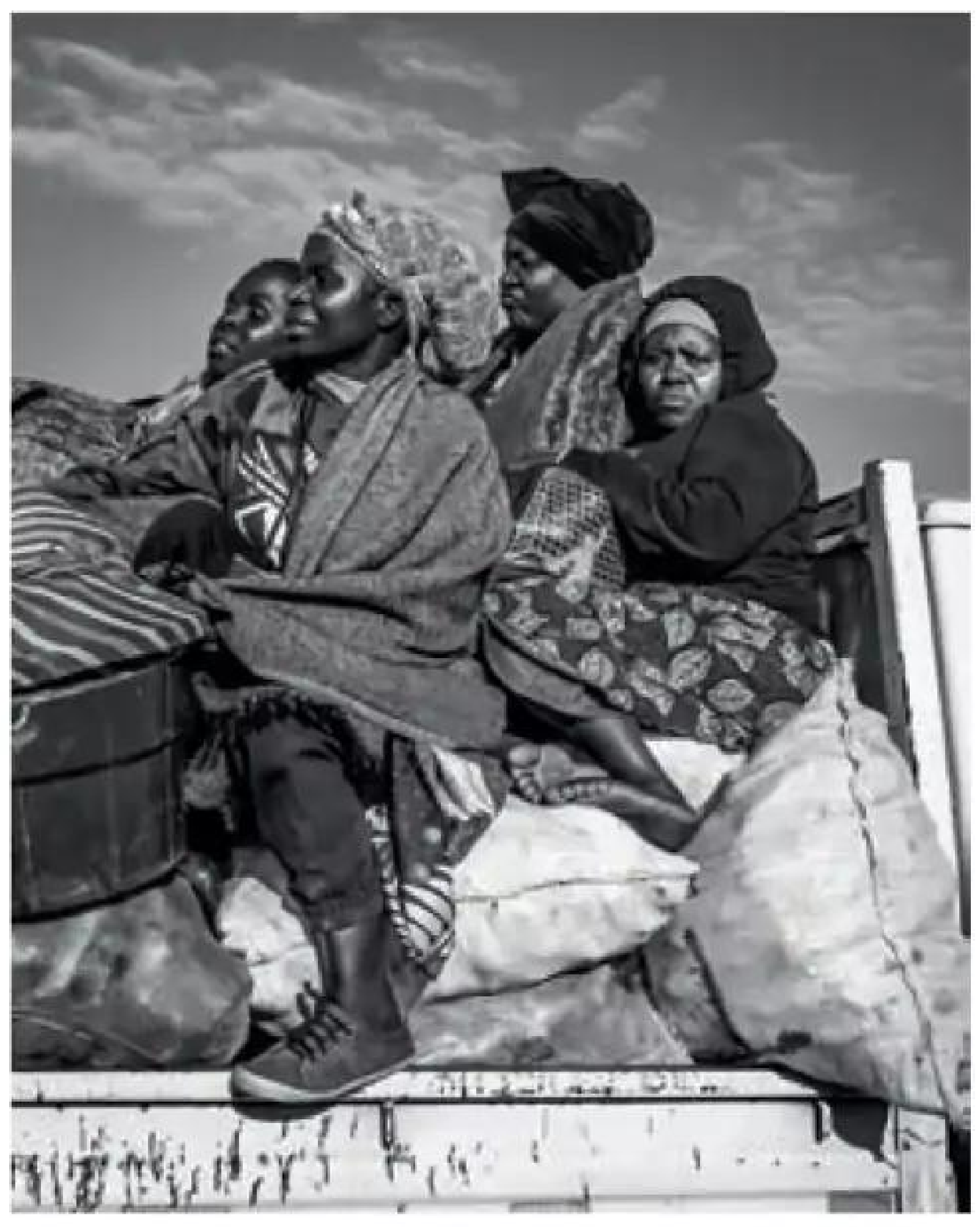


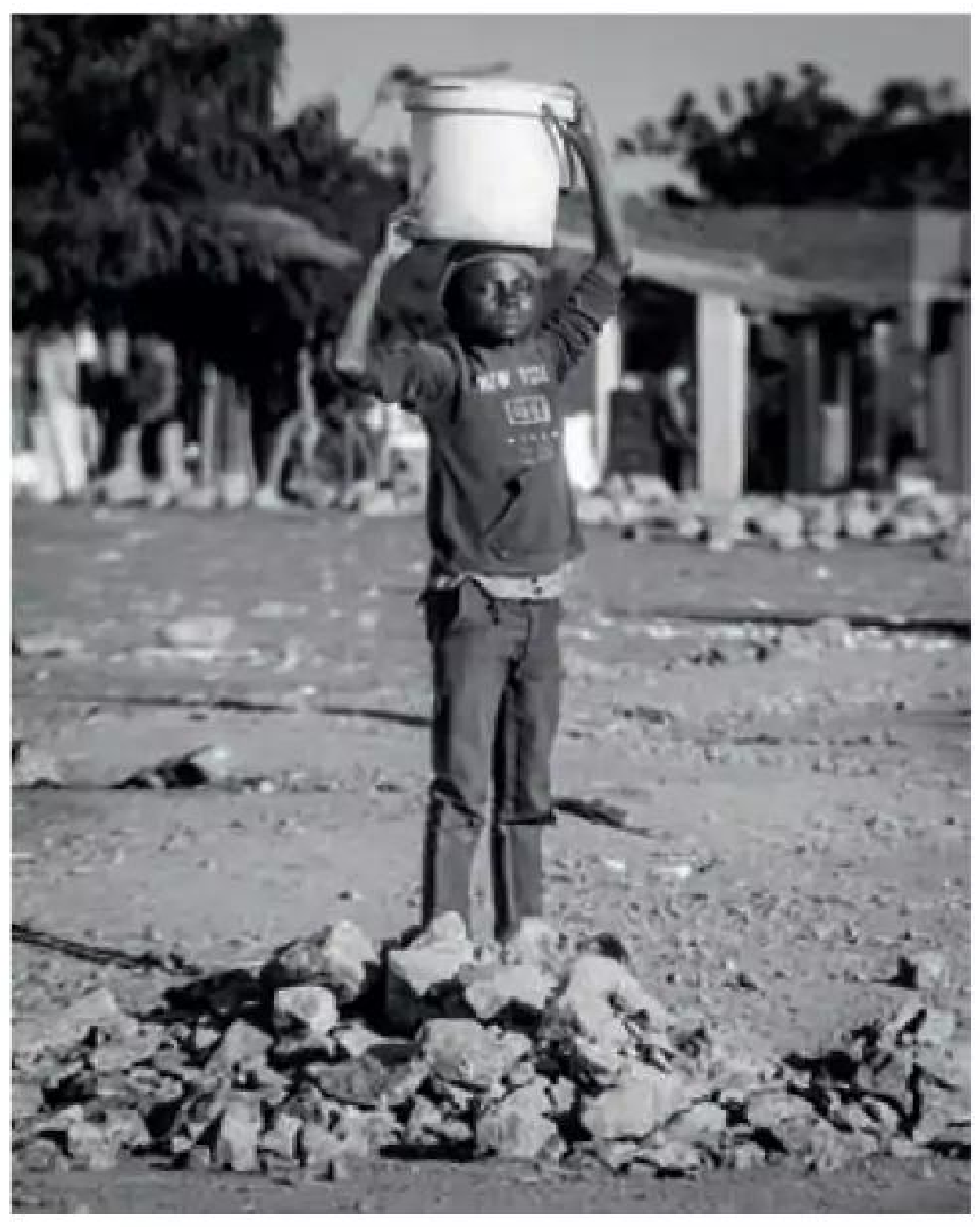
16. CHRIS HAWKINS

ROADS OF MALAWI



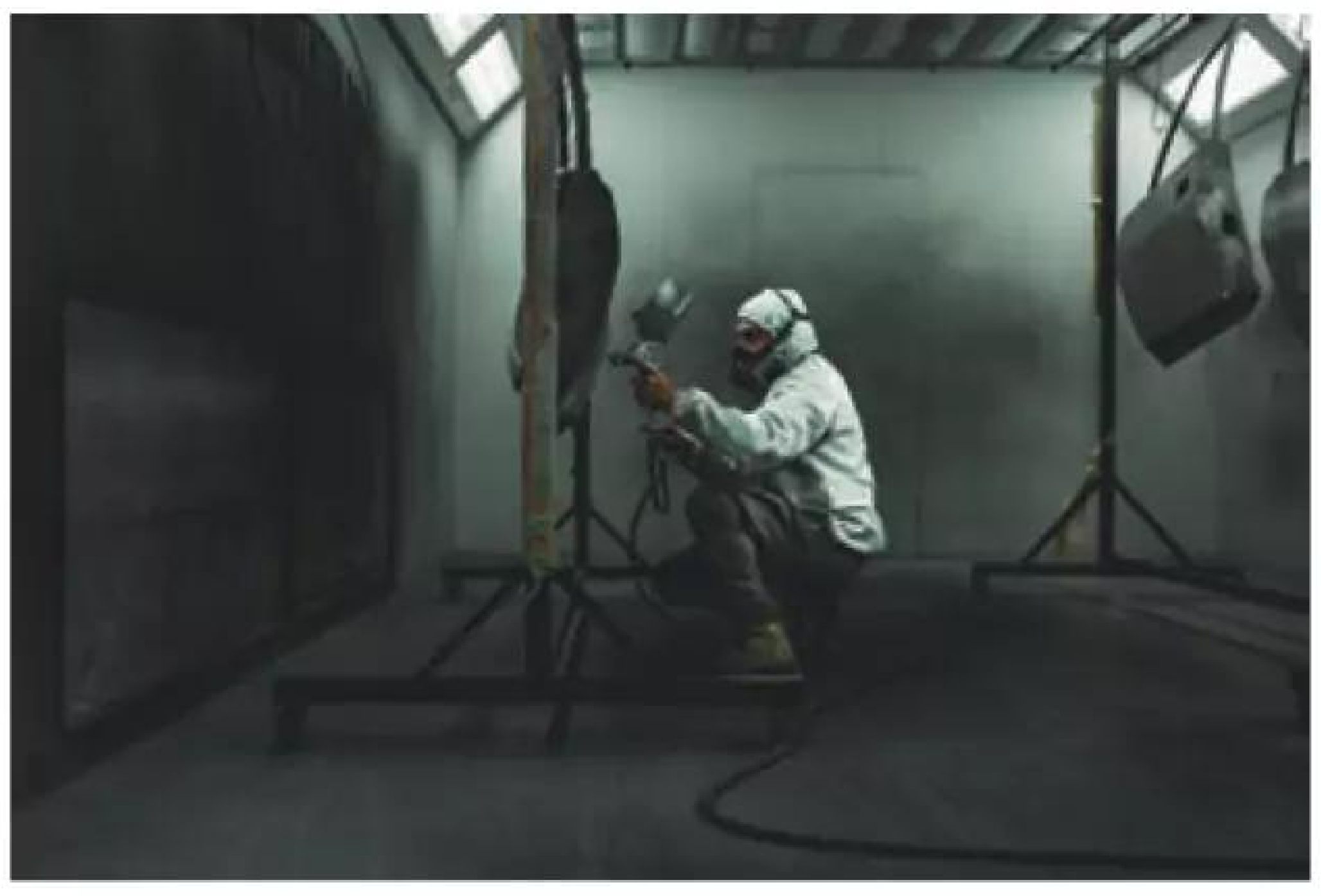


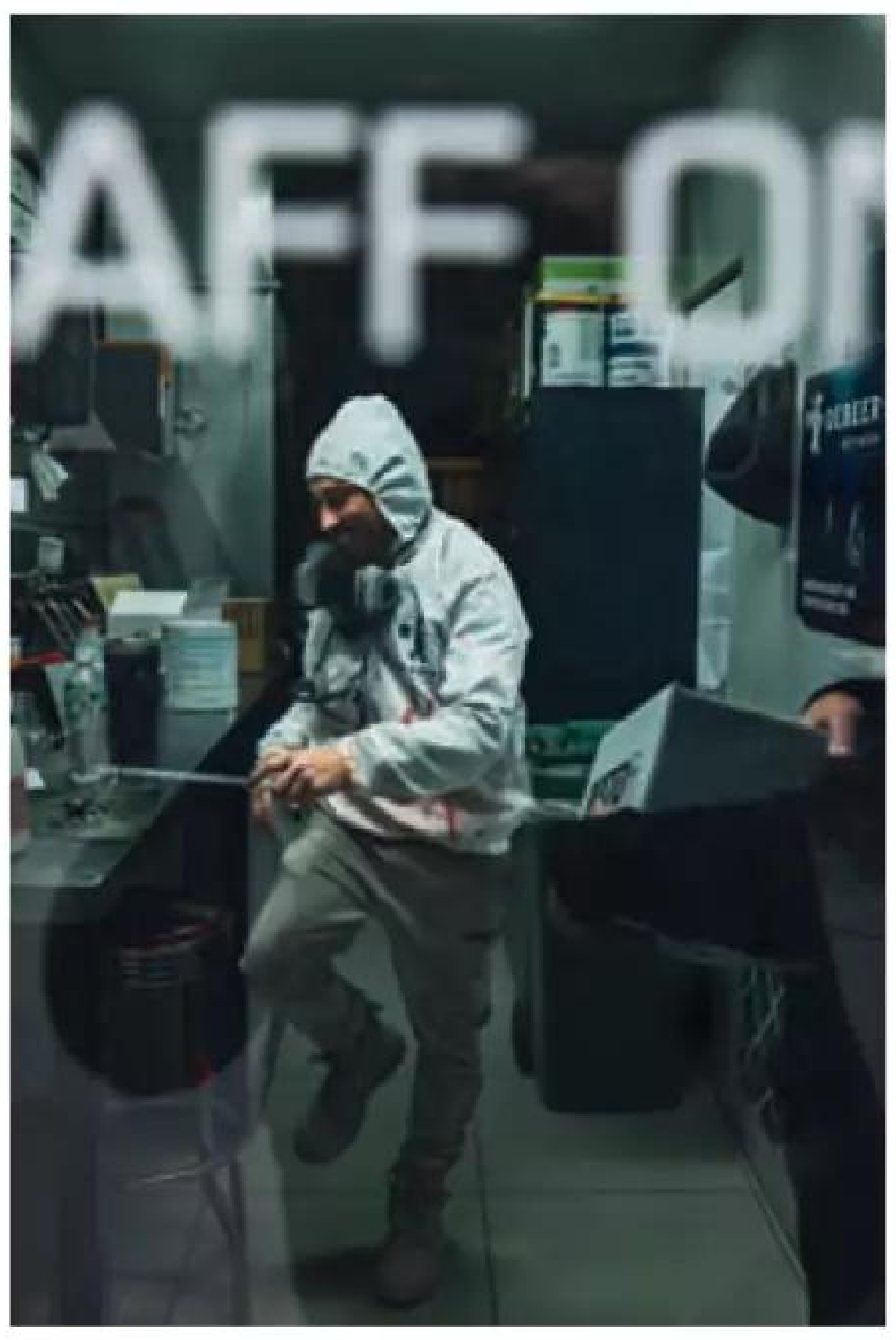


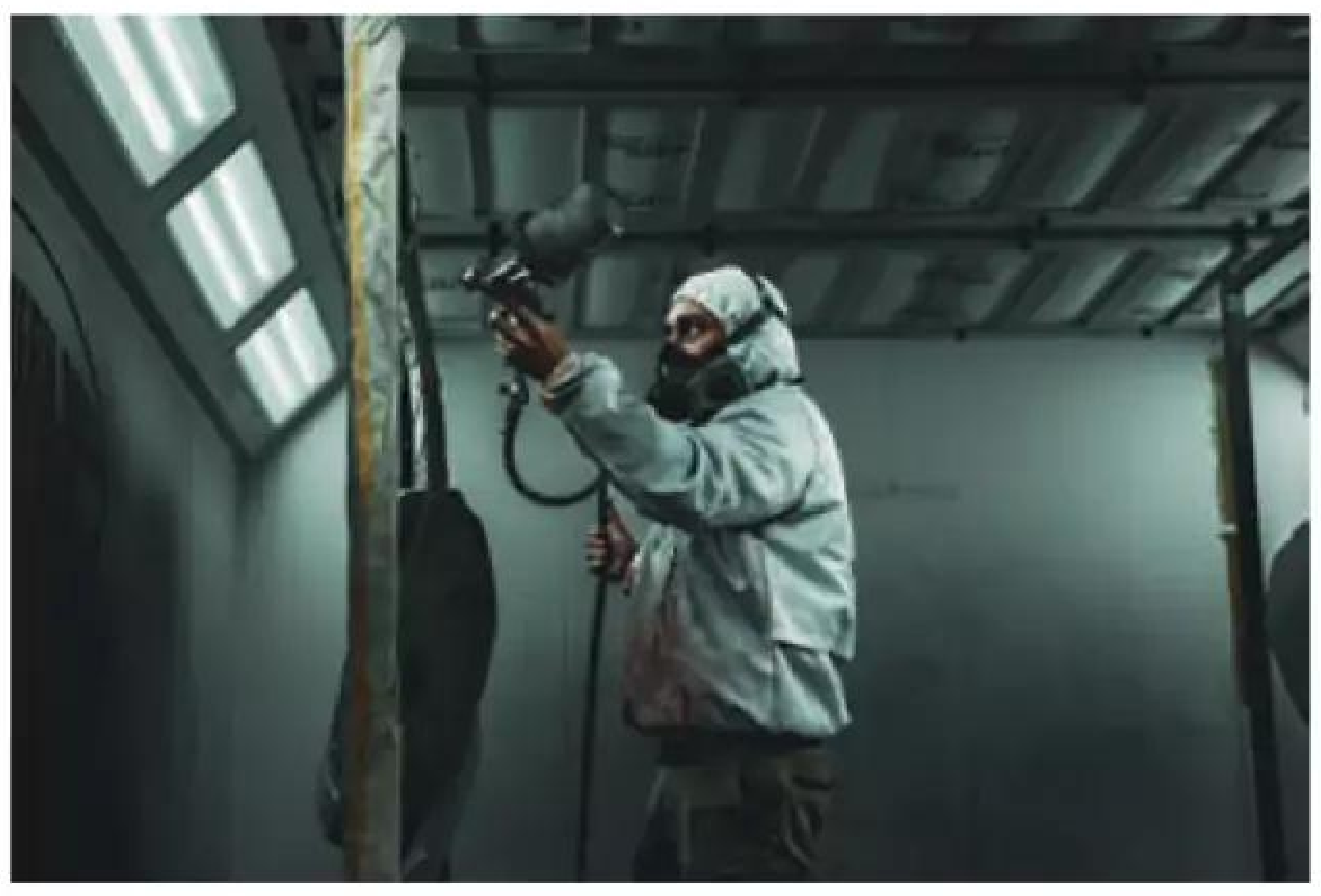


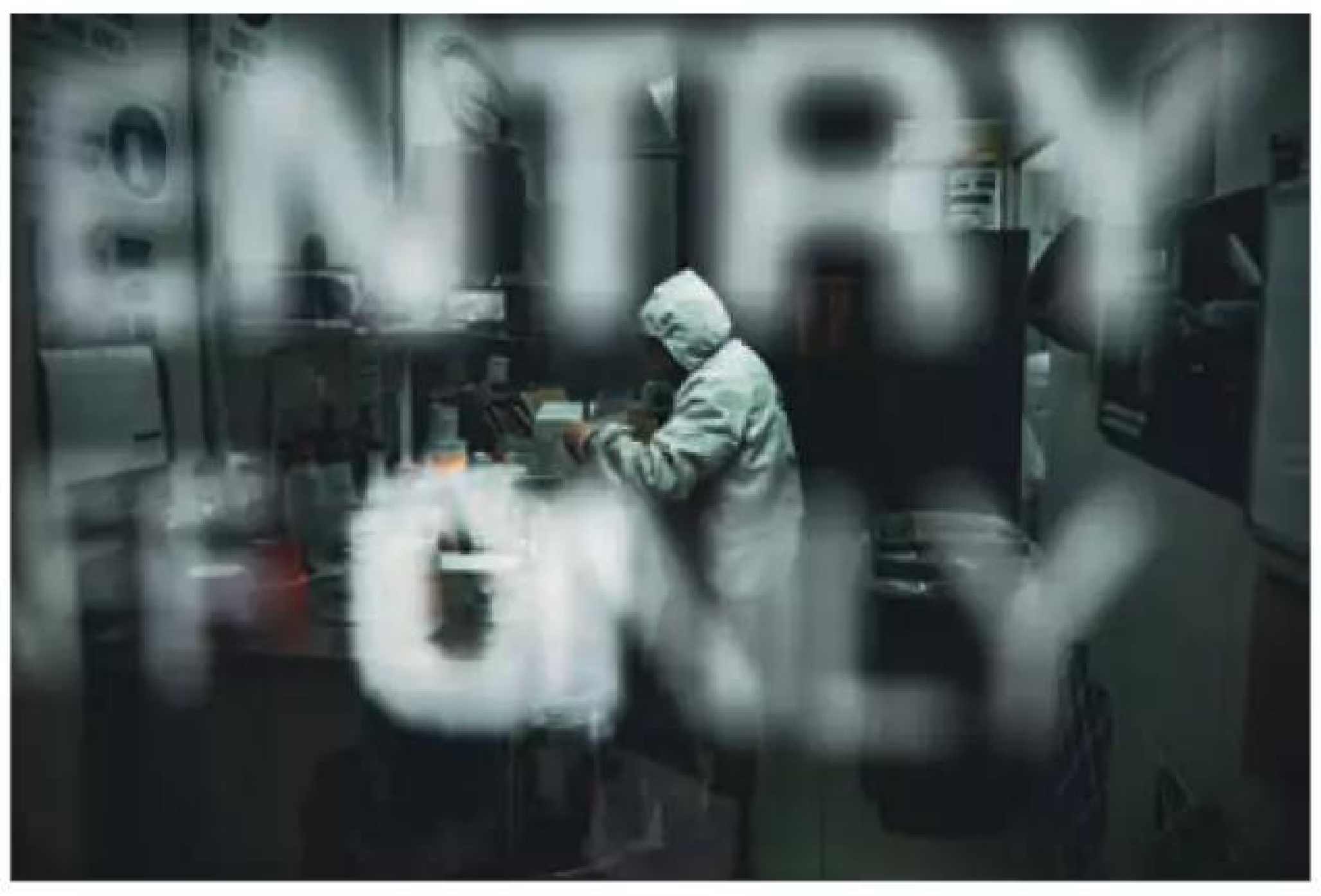
17. JACOB DEDMAN

UNDER THE SOUTHERN ROD LIGHTS



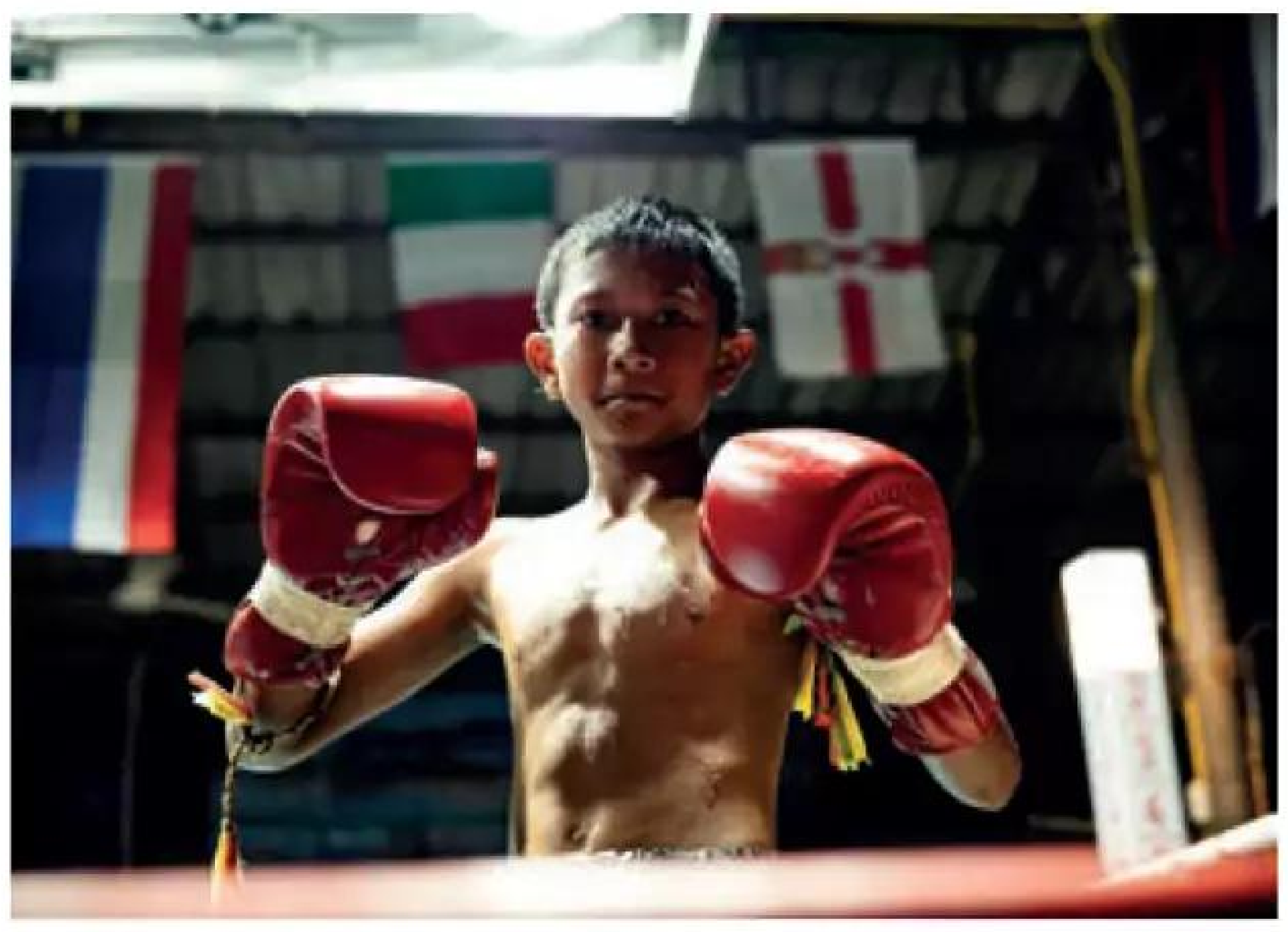


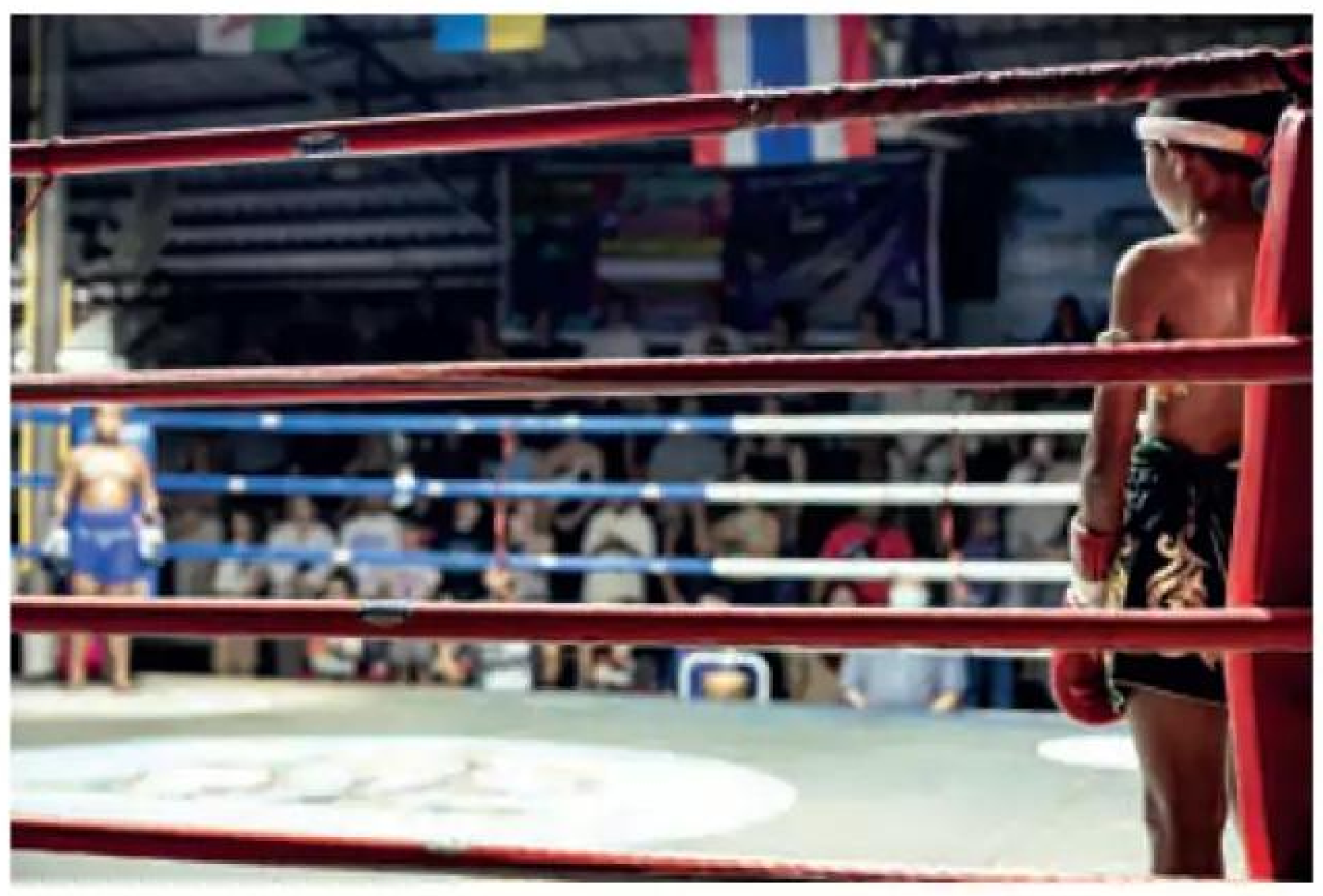


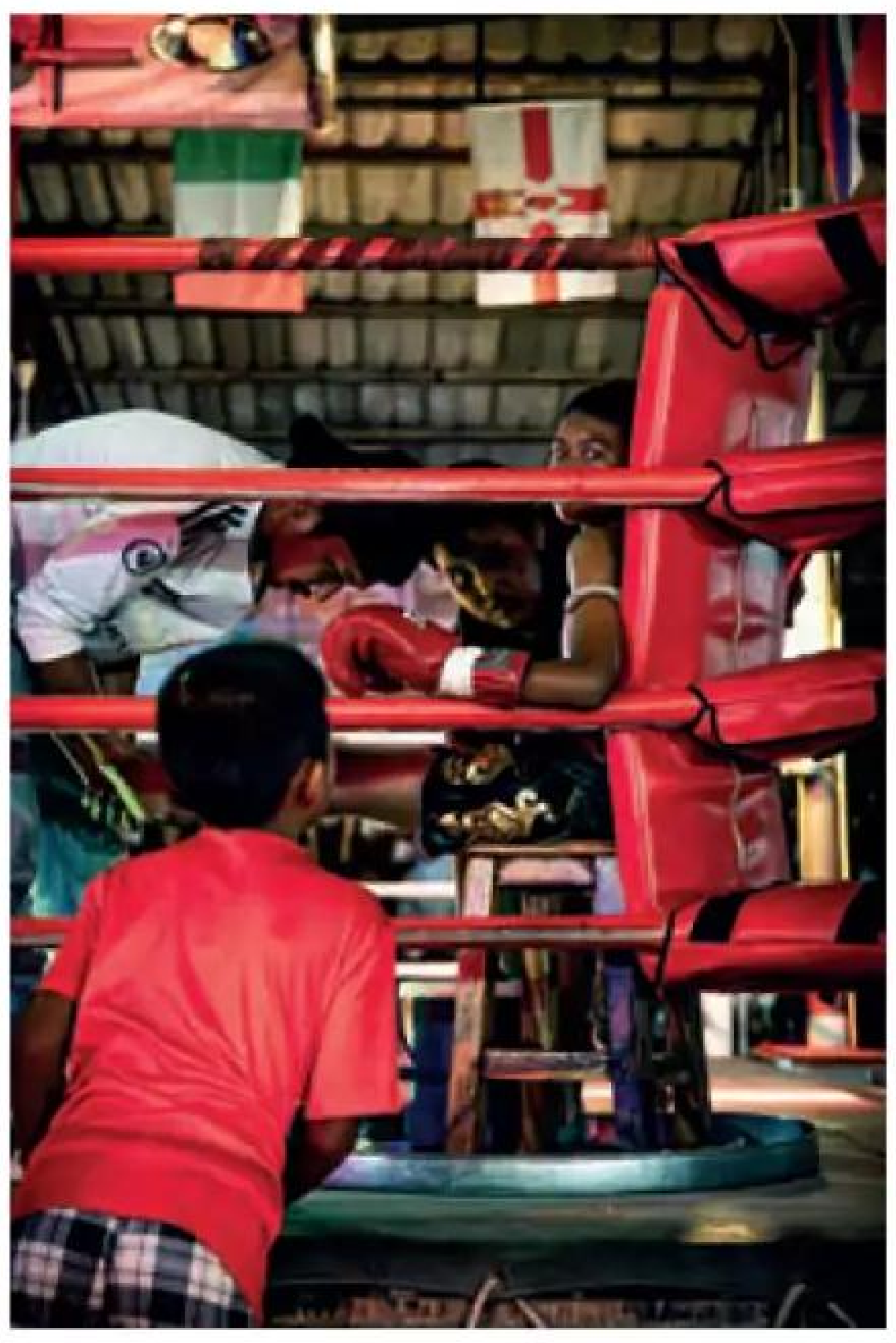


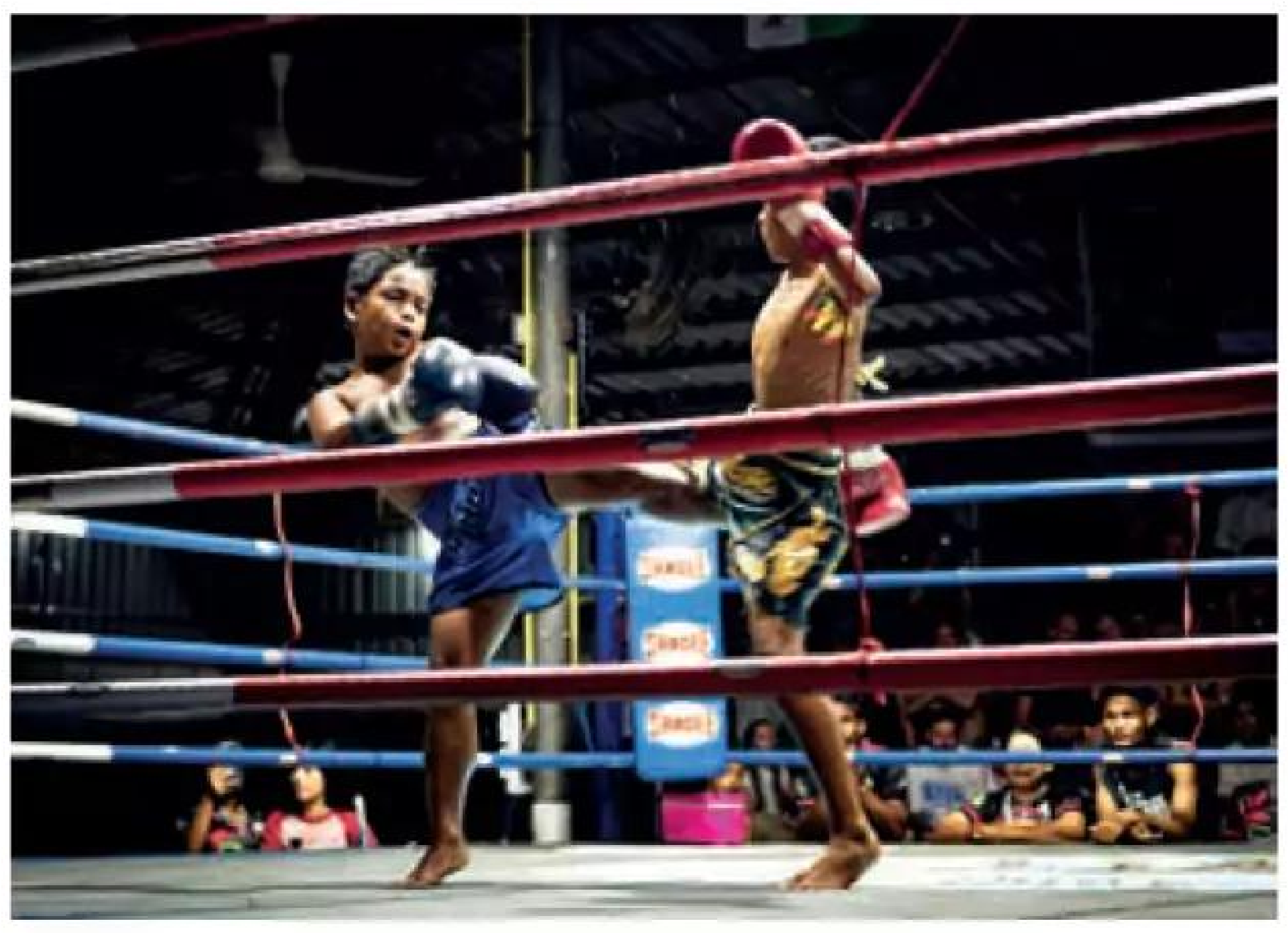
18. HADRIEL TORRES

TIGER EYE KID – CHAMPION OF KO LANTA



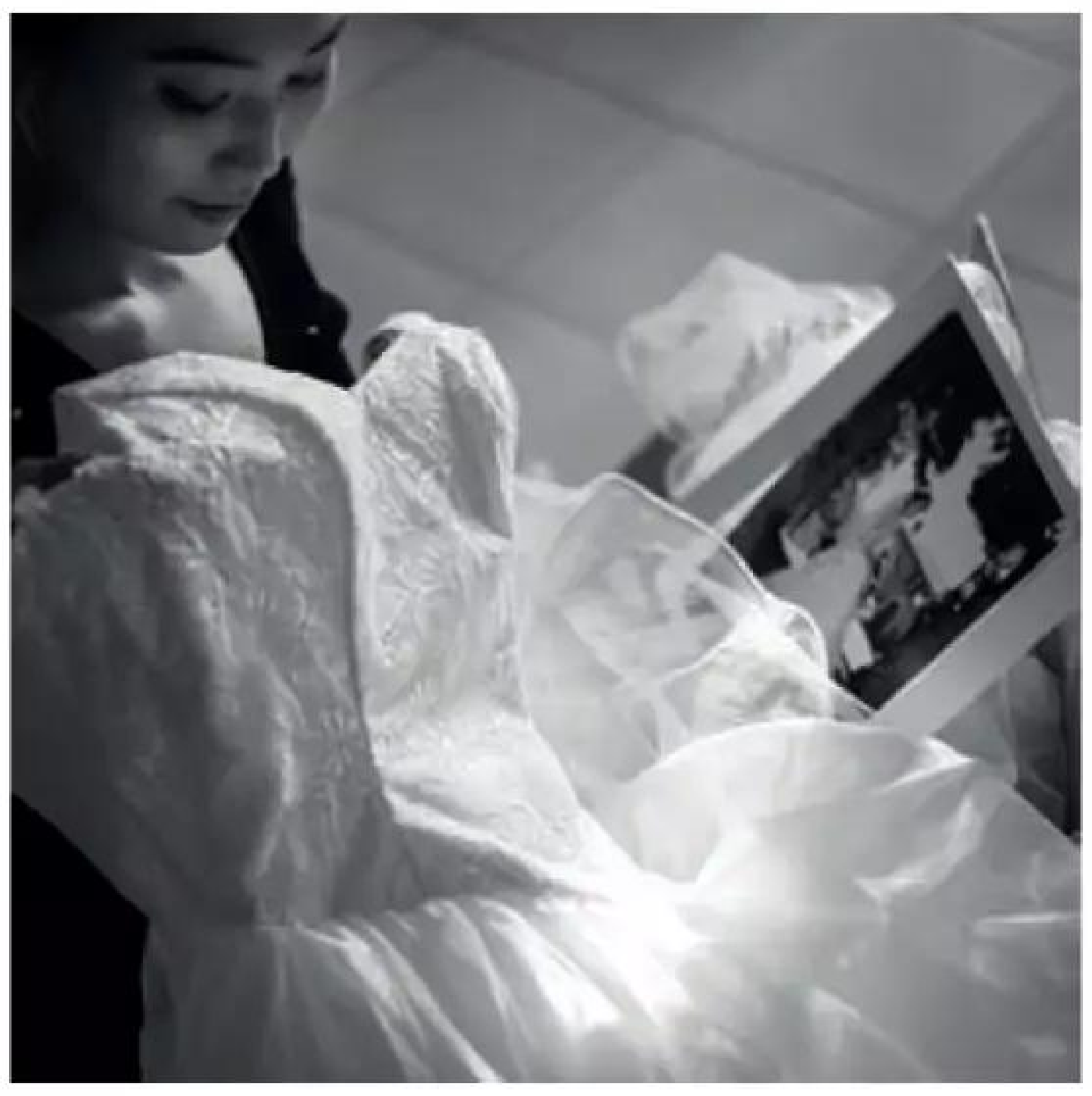


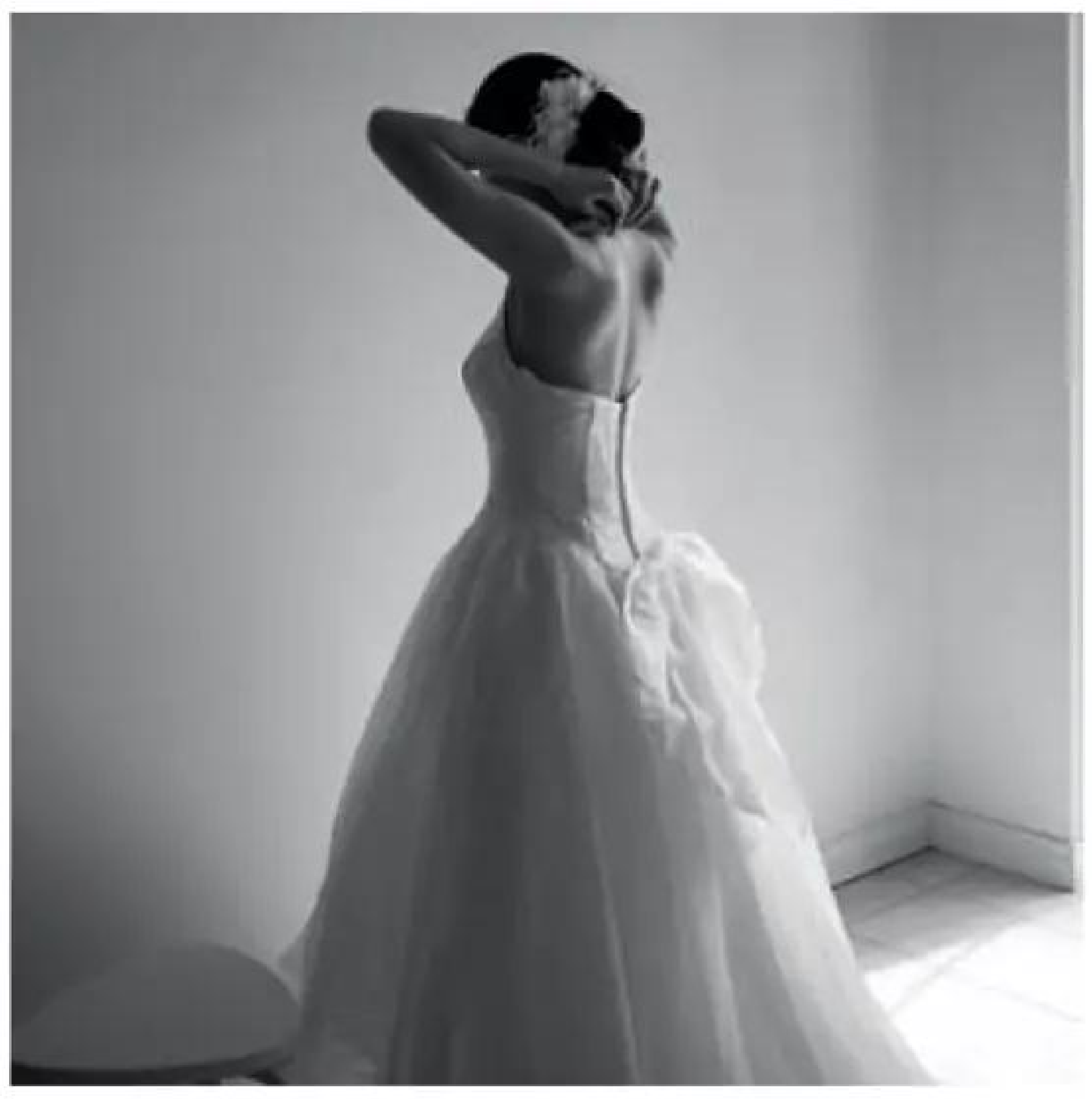


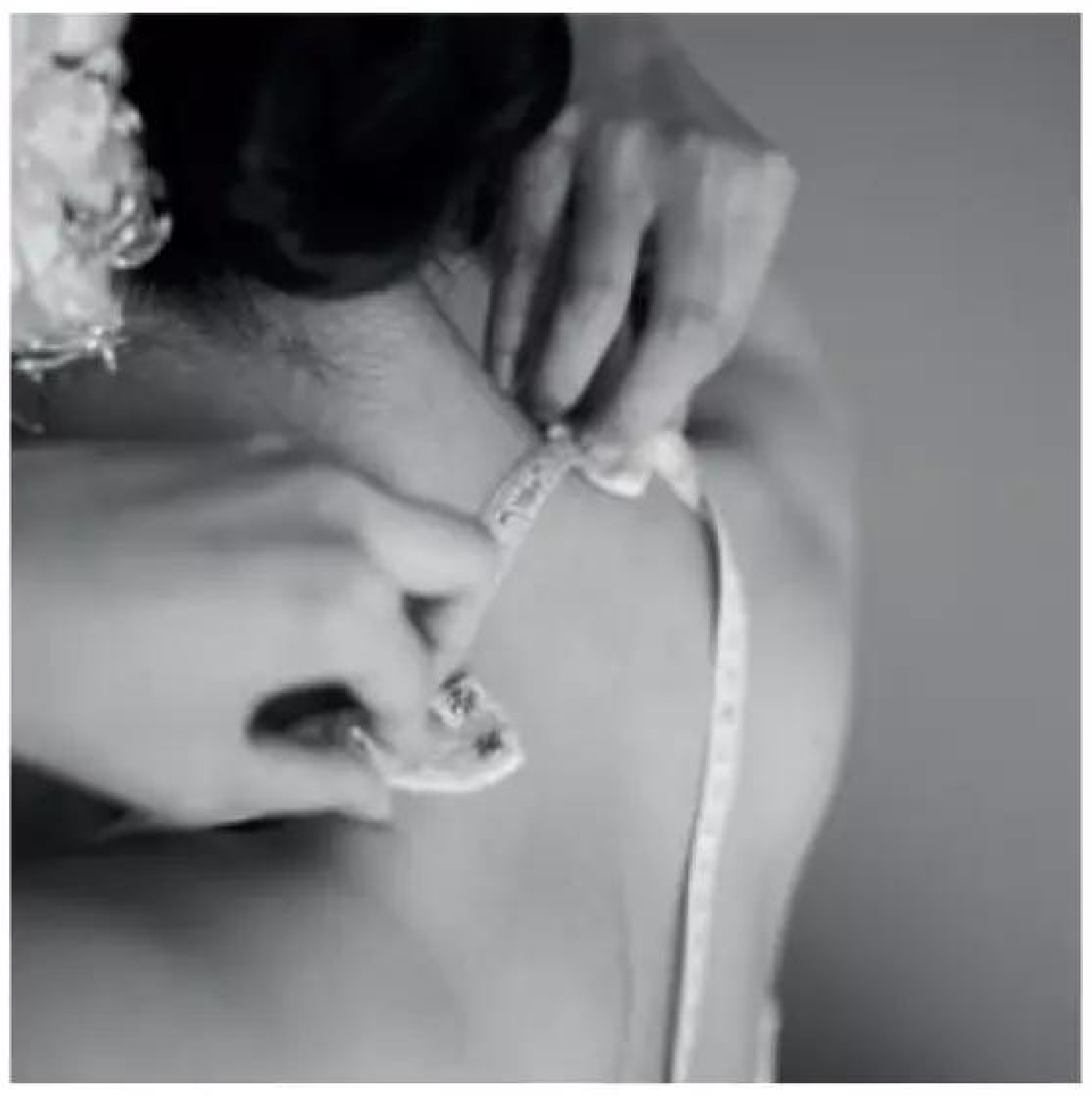


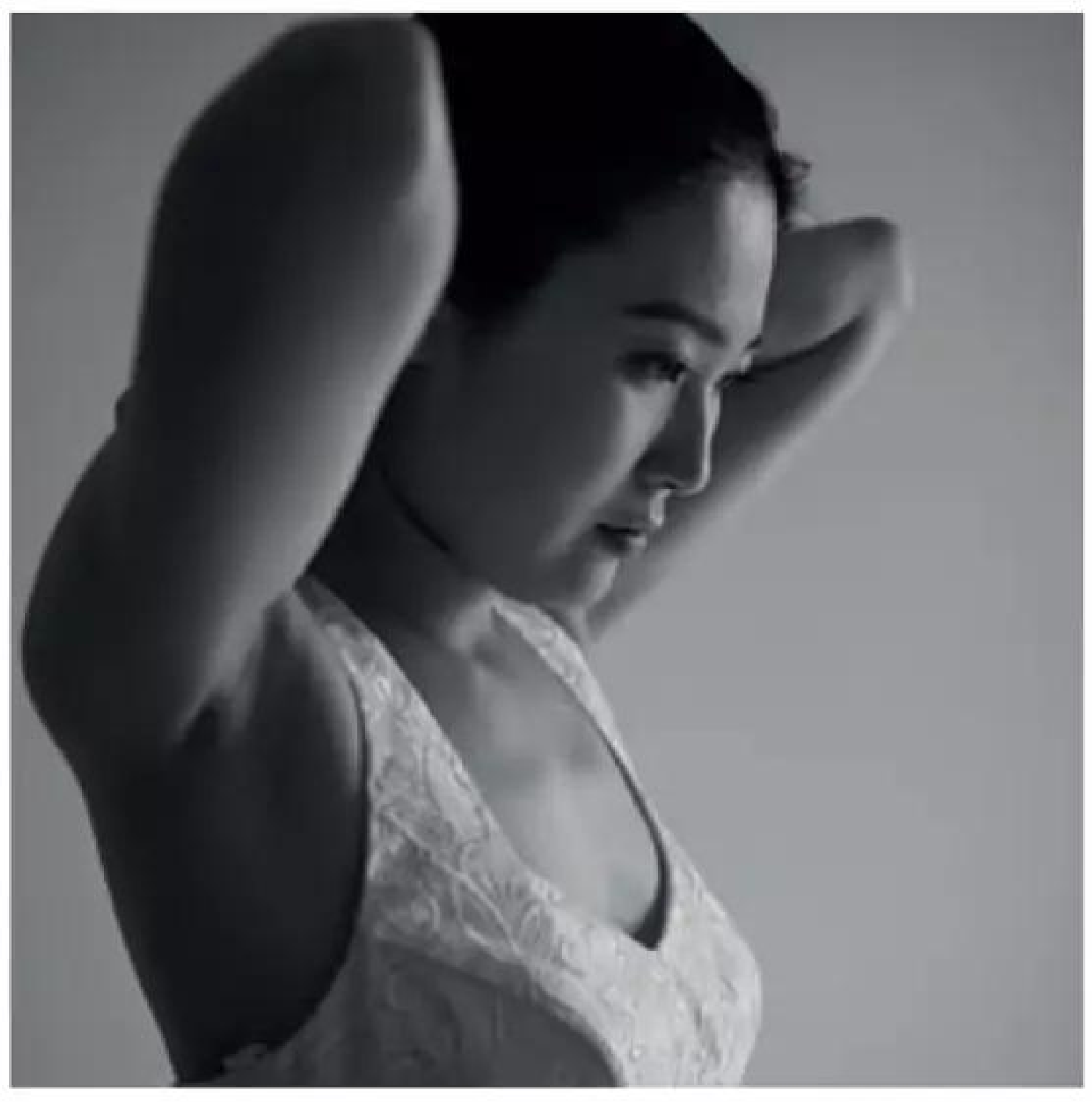
19. YOKO SAMESHIMA

SEVEN CENTIMETERS AND THIRTY YEARS



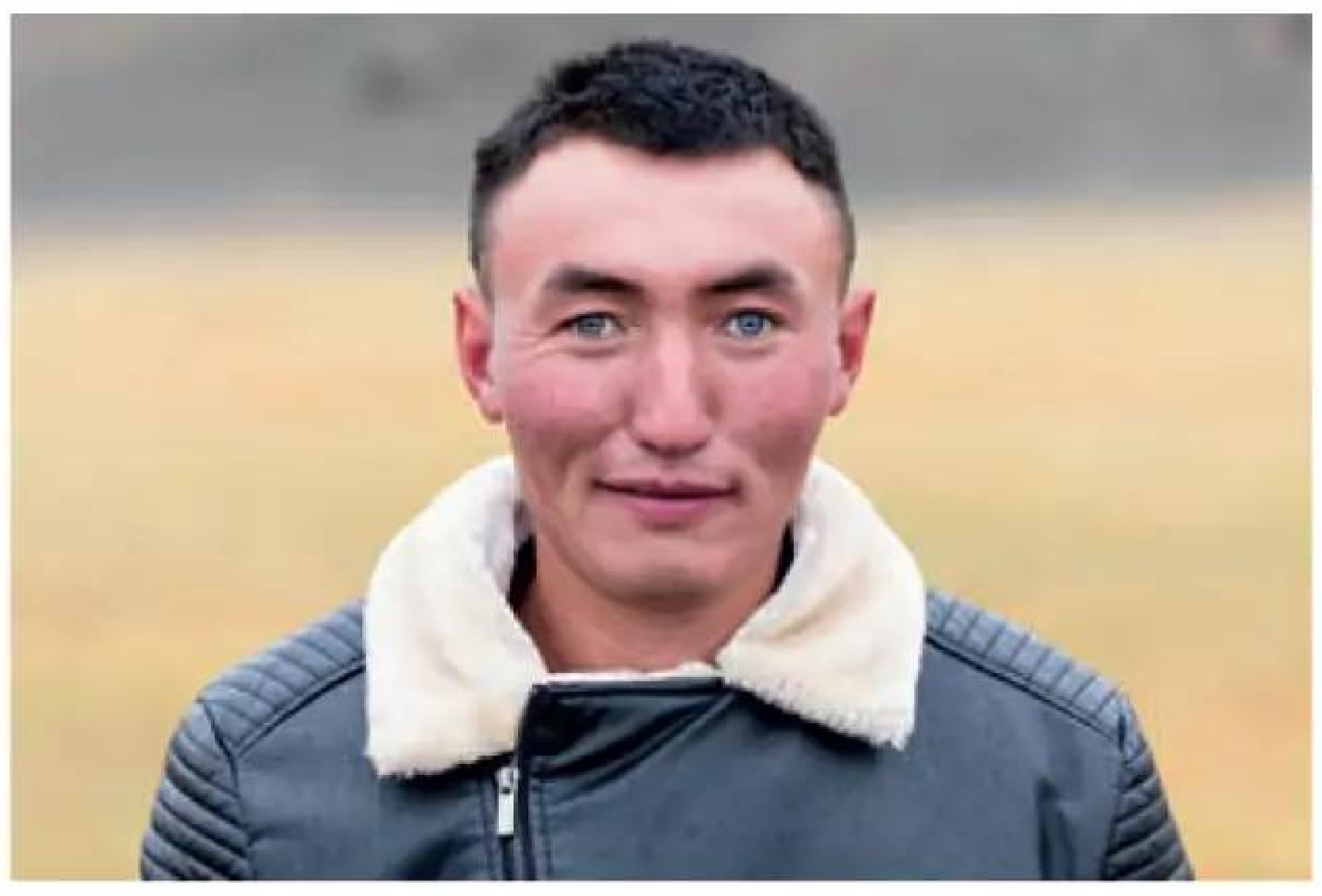


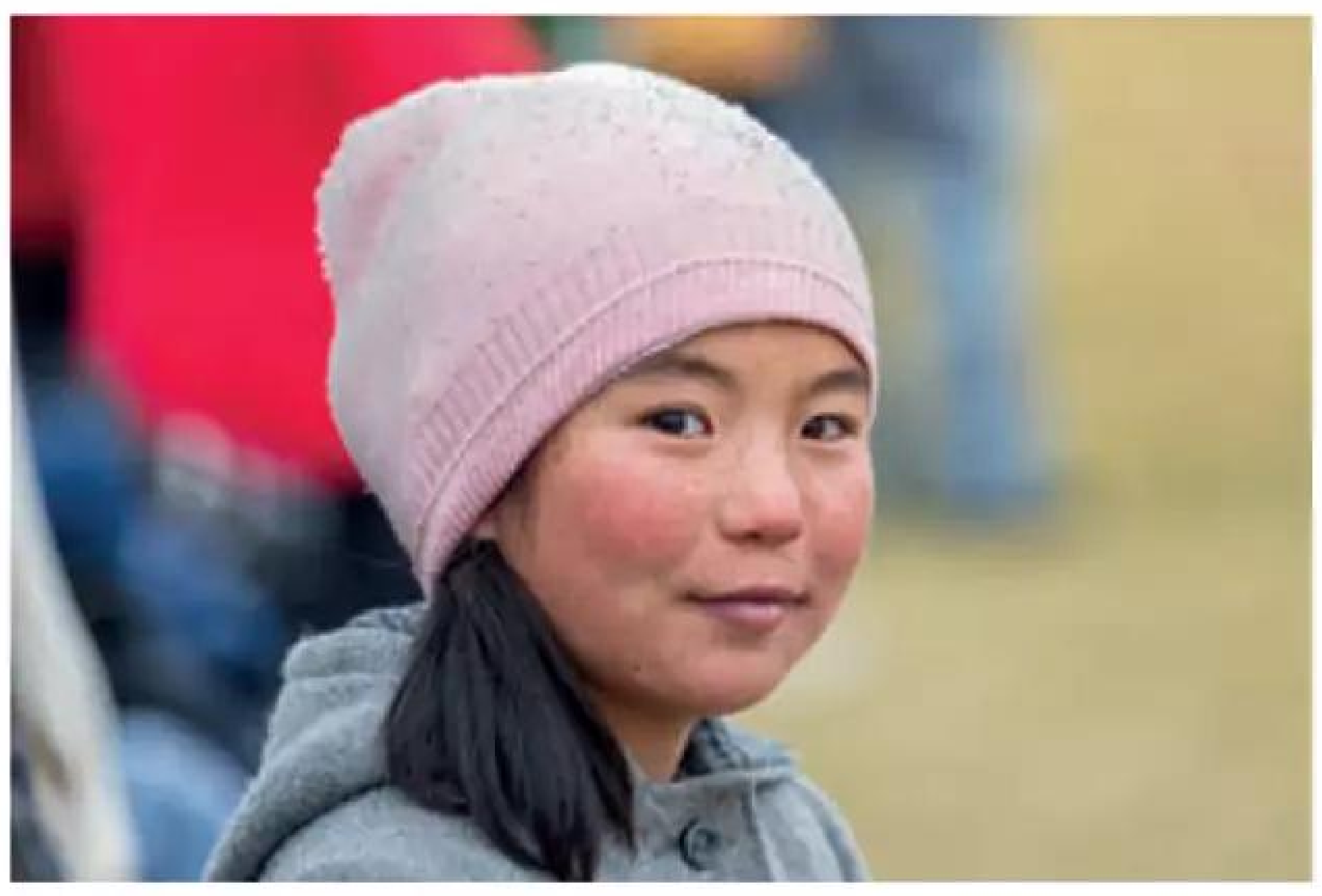


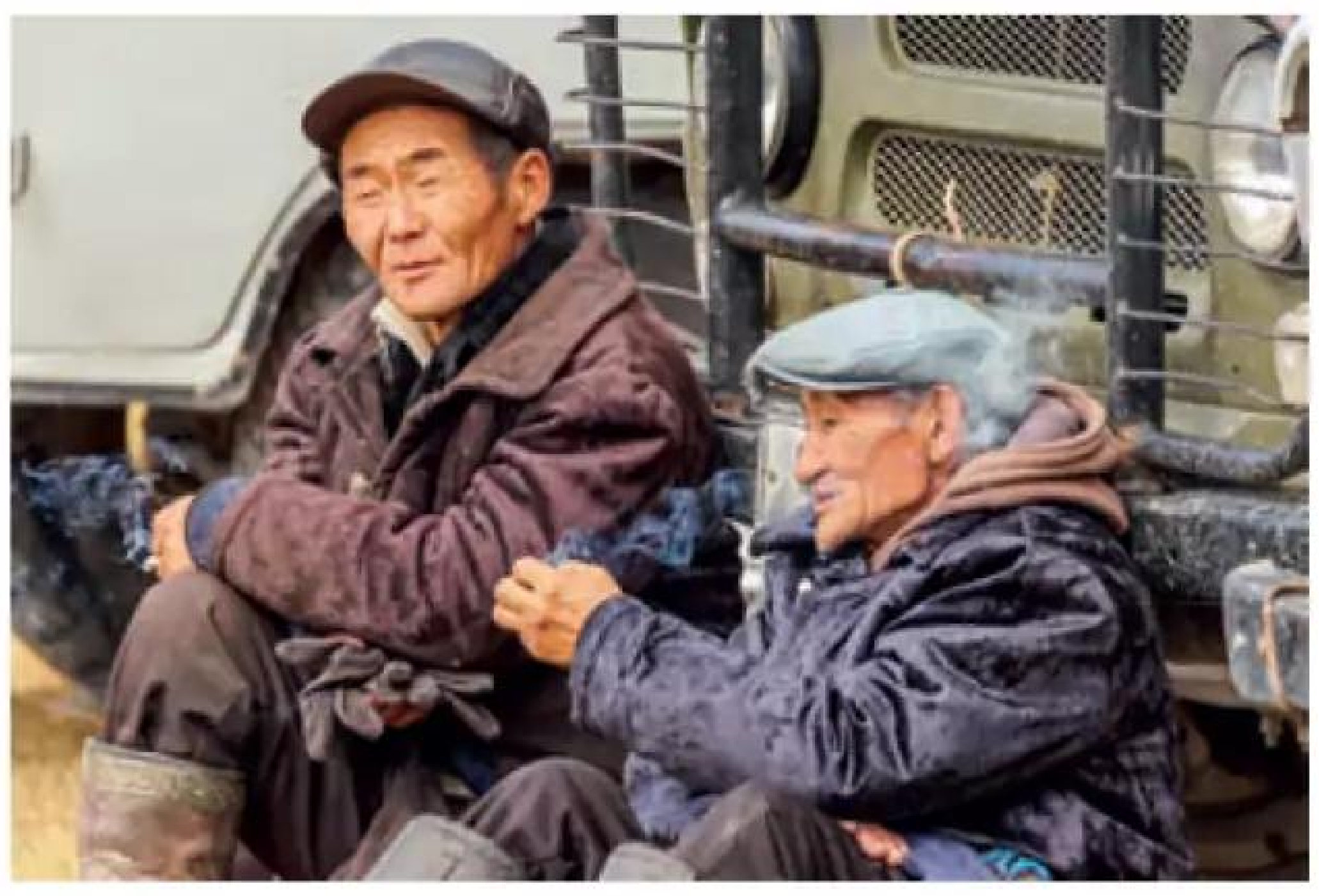


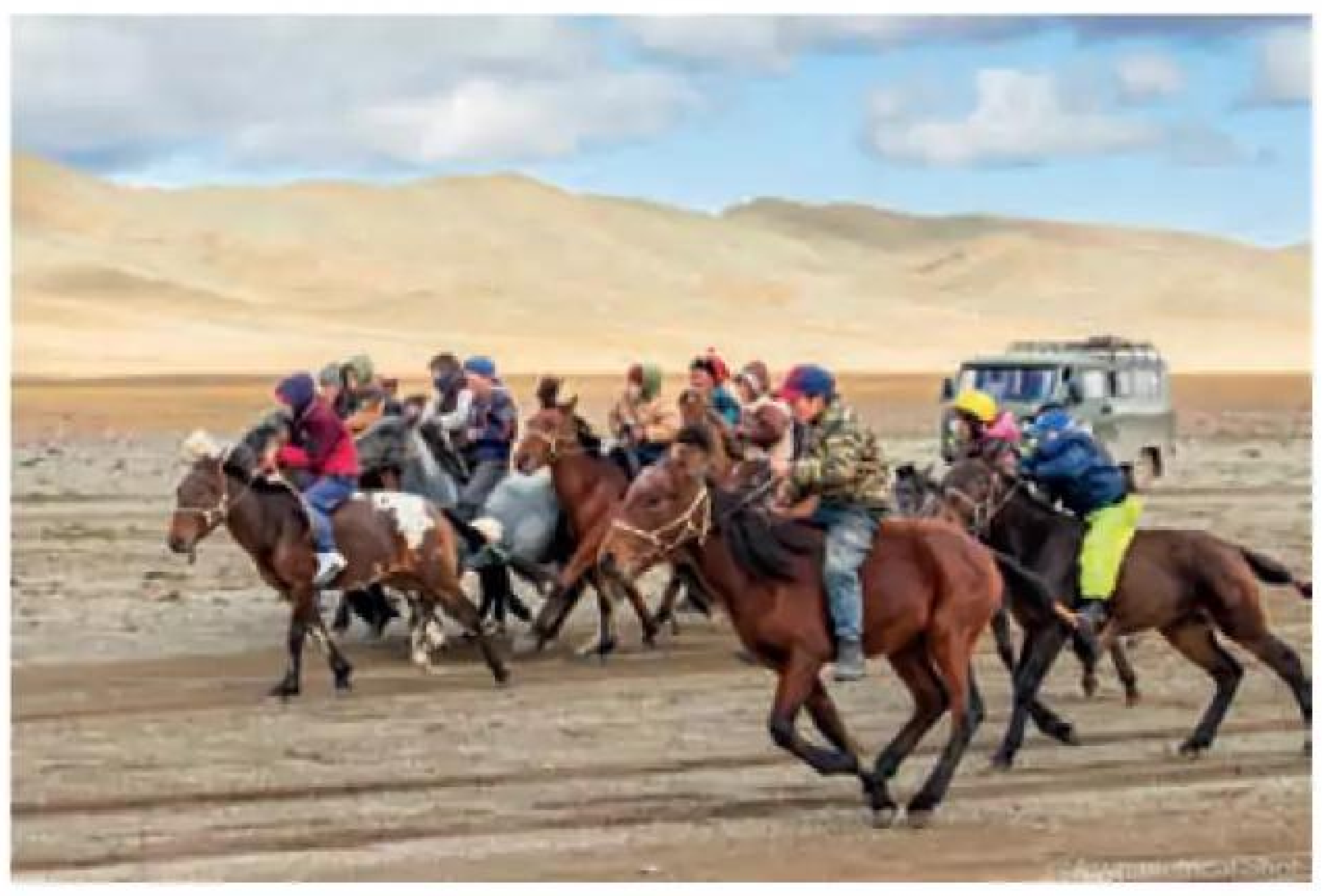
20. STEVEN WARNER

ANCESTRAL ECHOES



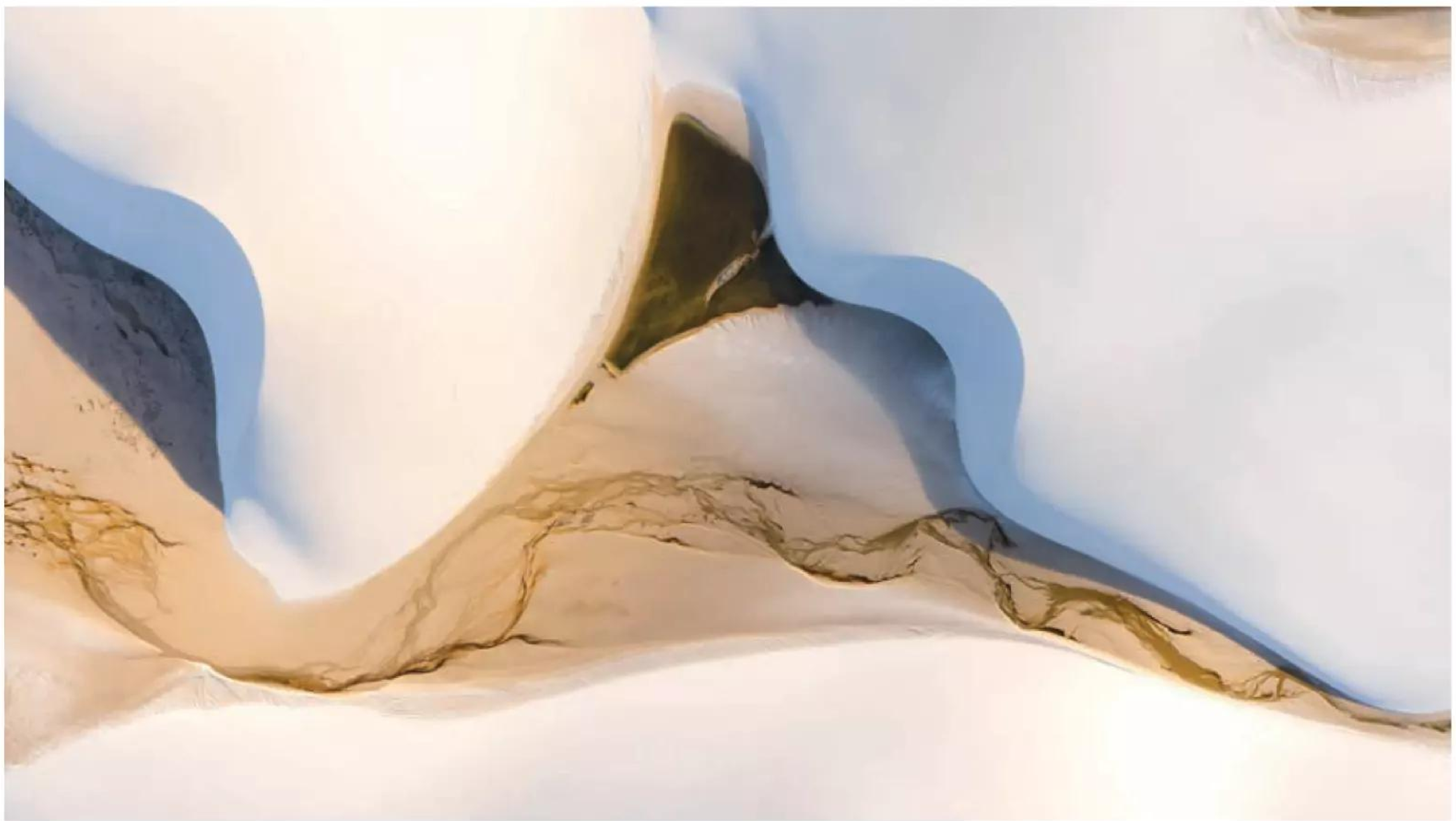






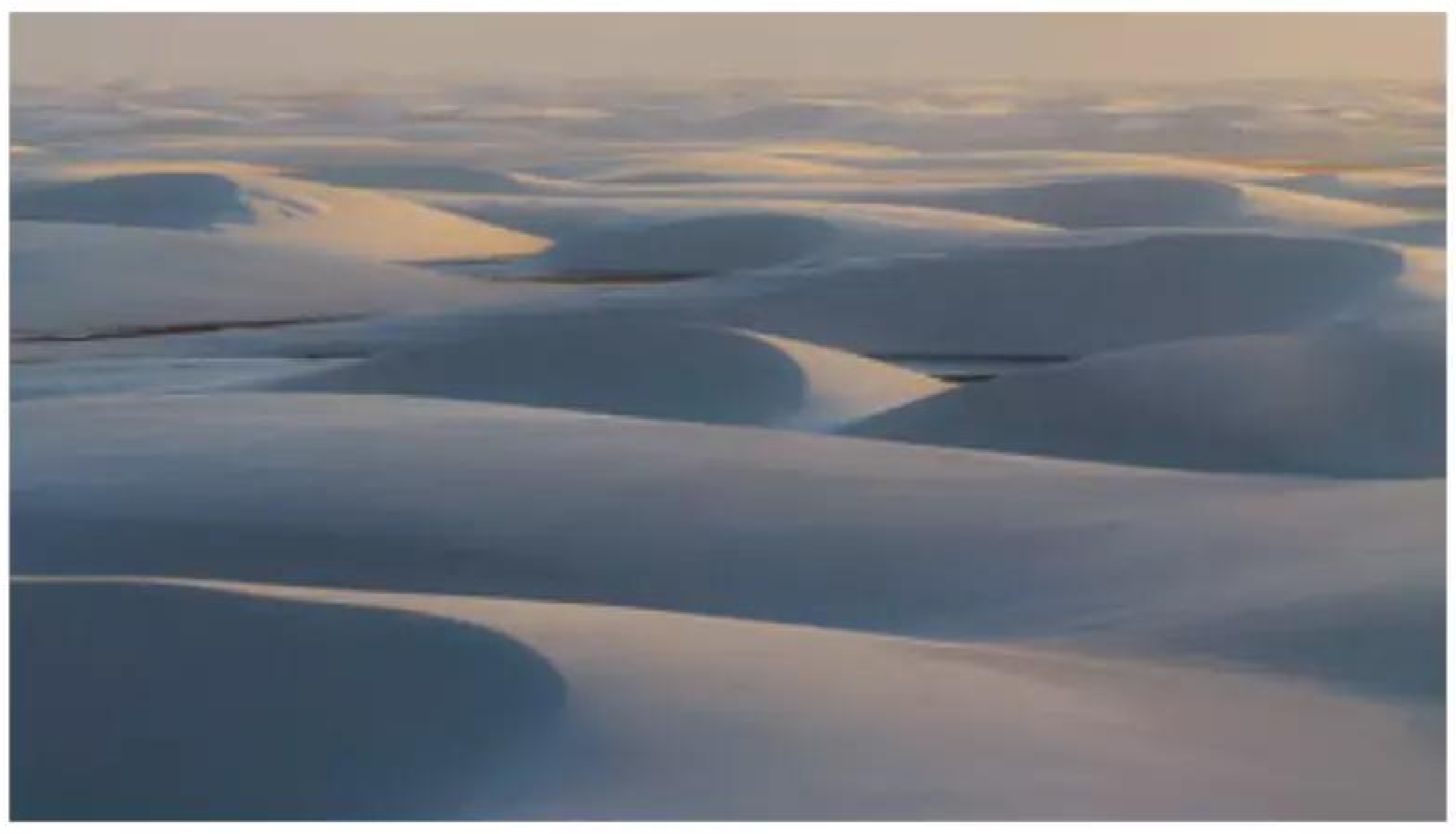
WINNER

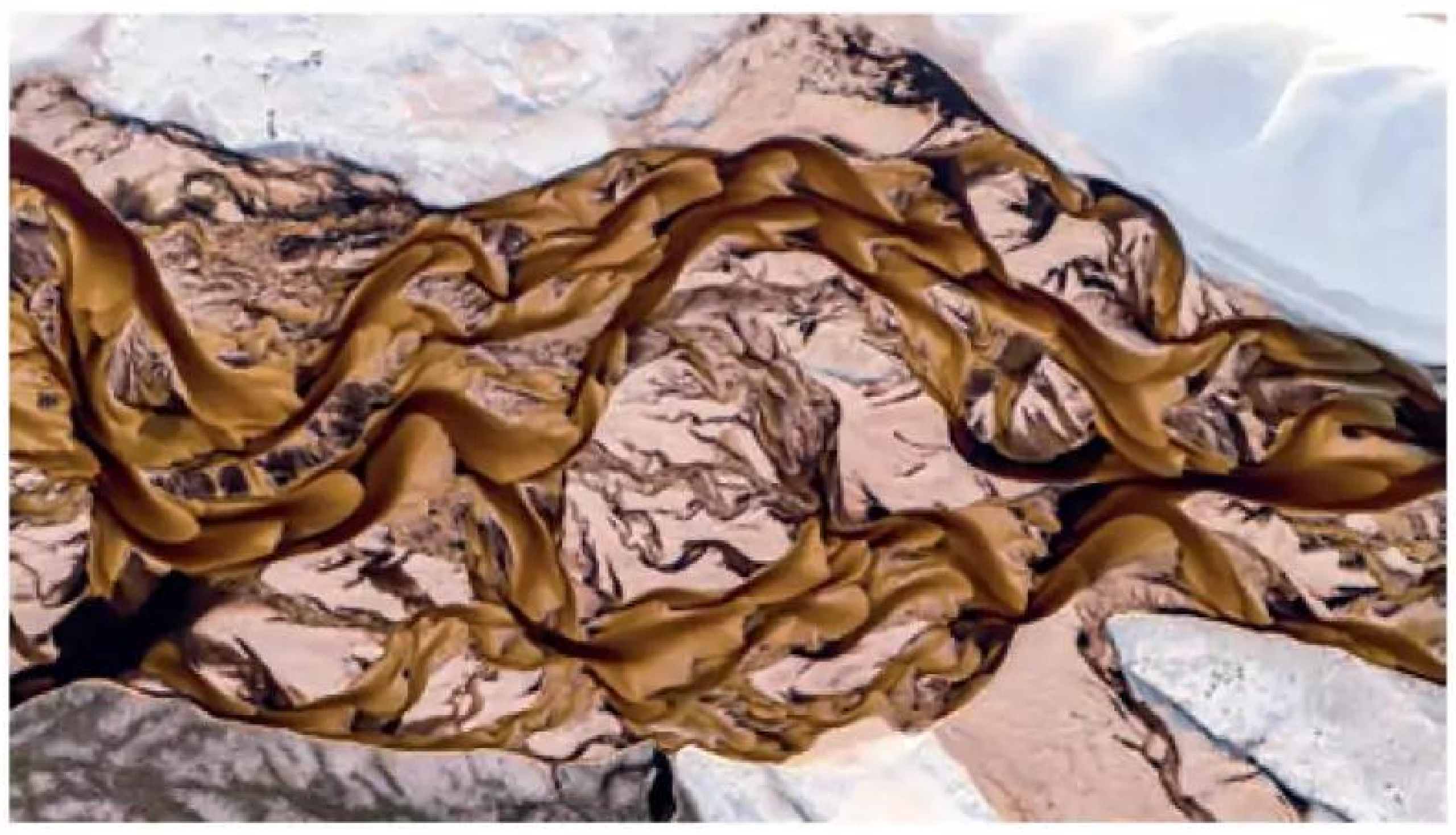
AERIAL

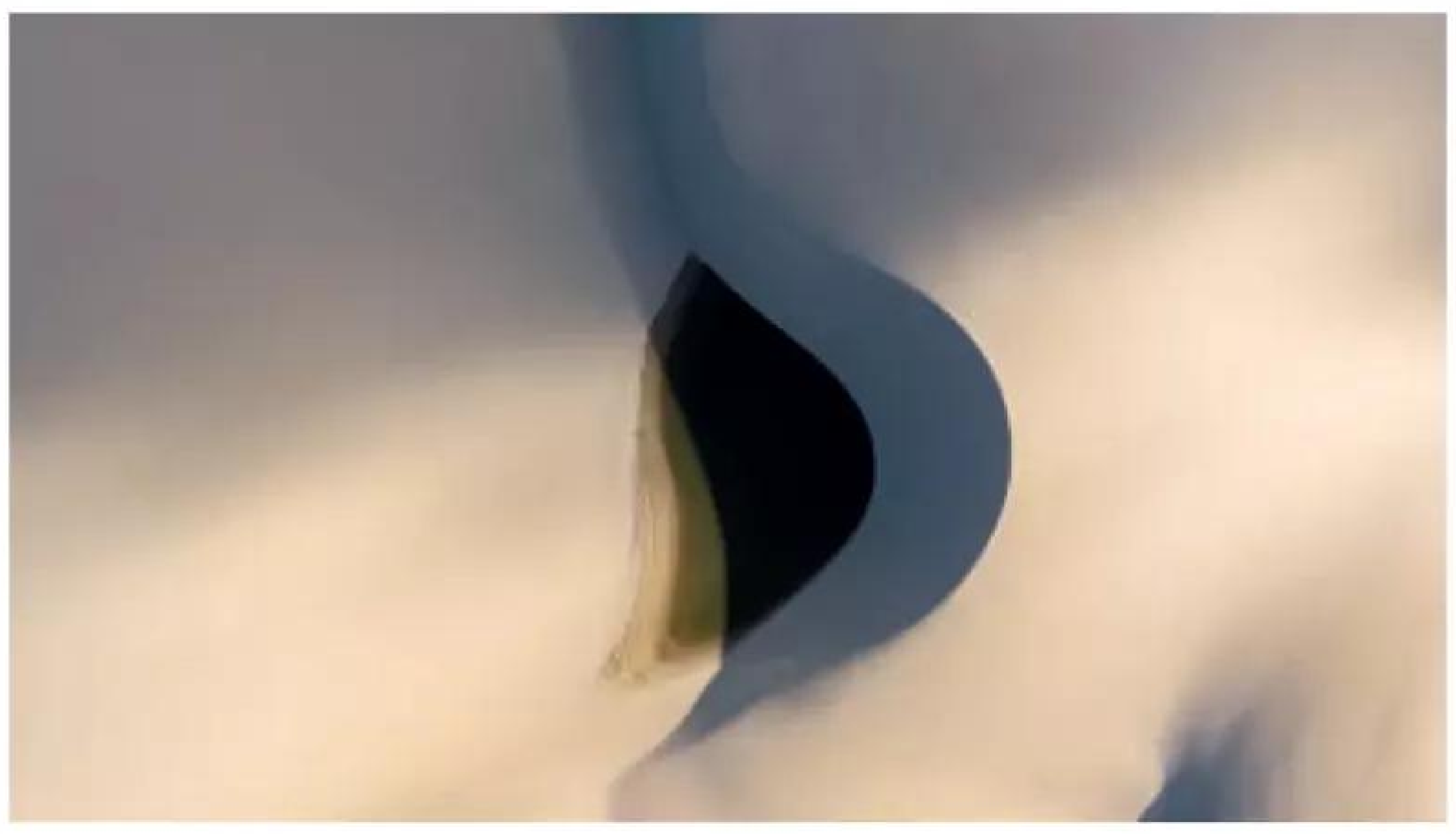


LUKE MACKENZIE

@imlukemackenzie







LENÇÓIS MARANHENSES

34-YEAR-OLD Gold Coast photographer Luke Mackenzie loves seeking out remote locations, and in recent years he has enjoyed sharing these little-known places through his photography.

For his Aerial category-winning series *Lençóis Maranhenses*, he flew above the UNESCO-listed national park in northern Brazil, a landscape he says was unlike anything he had seen before.

Although partly a desert environment, the valleys between the dunes fill with freshwater lagoons during the rainy season, held in place by the impermeable rock beneath.

"It's a natural wonder that forms and disappears within a few months each year, and photographing it relies heavily on imagination, because you're seeing it differently to the person beside you," he says.

The shifting shapes, patterns and coloured lagoons offered endless possibilities, and Mackenzie captured them with clarity and creativity that impressed our judges this year.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

TIM LEVY: This series by Luke Mackenzie captures the sand dunes of Northern Brazil – and honestly, who knew Brazil had desert dunes like this? As judges, we see a lot of images from the same locations, so it's always good to see other 'less-travelled' environments. The images are a compelling study in texture and abstraction, unified by a distinct aerial perspective. While each photo works powerfully on its own, the inclusion of the horizon shot adds crucial context, grounding those abstract shapes in a tangible environment.

What also ties them together is the presence of water. There is a beautiful paradox about water in a desert – it acts as a glitch in the landscape that disrupts the patterned sand with a mesmerising randomness. Together with the wind, it creates the intricate shapes we see revealed under the right light.

PRIZE: $1,000 cash, a Western Digital prize pack valued at $1,500, a Photobookshop HD layflat photobook valued at $289, plus three Retouch4Me photo retouching apps.

RUNNER-UP
AERIAL

RACHEL JANE PANNEKOEK

@ __racheljane

SOUTHWEST TEXTURES

WESTERN Australia-based photographer Rachel Jane Pannekoek says she has always been drawn to photography captured from a unique perspective, and it was aerial photography that really sparked that love.

"There is something about seeing familiar landscapes from above, finding the different patterns, colours and textures that you would never be able spot from the ground," she says.

"I grew up in the south of Western Australia and spend a lot of time exploring the coastline, forests, salt lakes, and many other areas of the region."

"Each place has its own look and feel, and that is what the inspiration was behind *Southwest Textures*: capturing the variety of patterns, textures and colours across the many different landscapes that I luckily have so close to home."

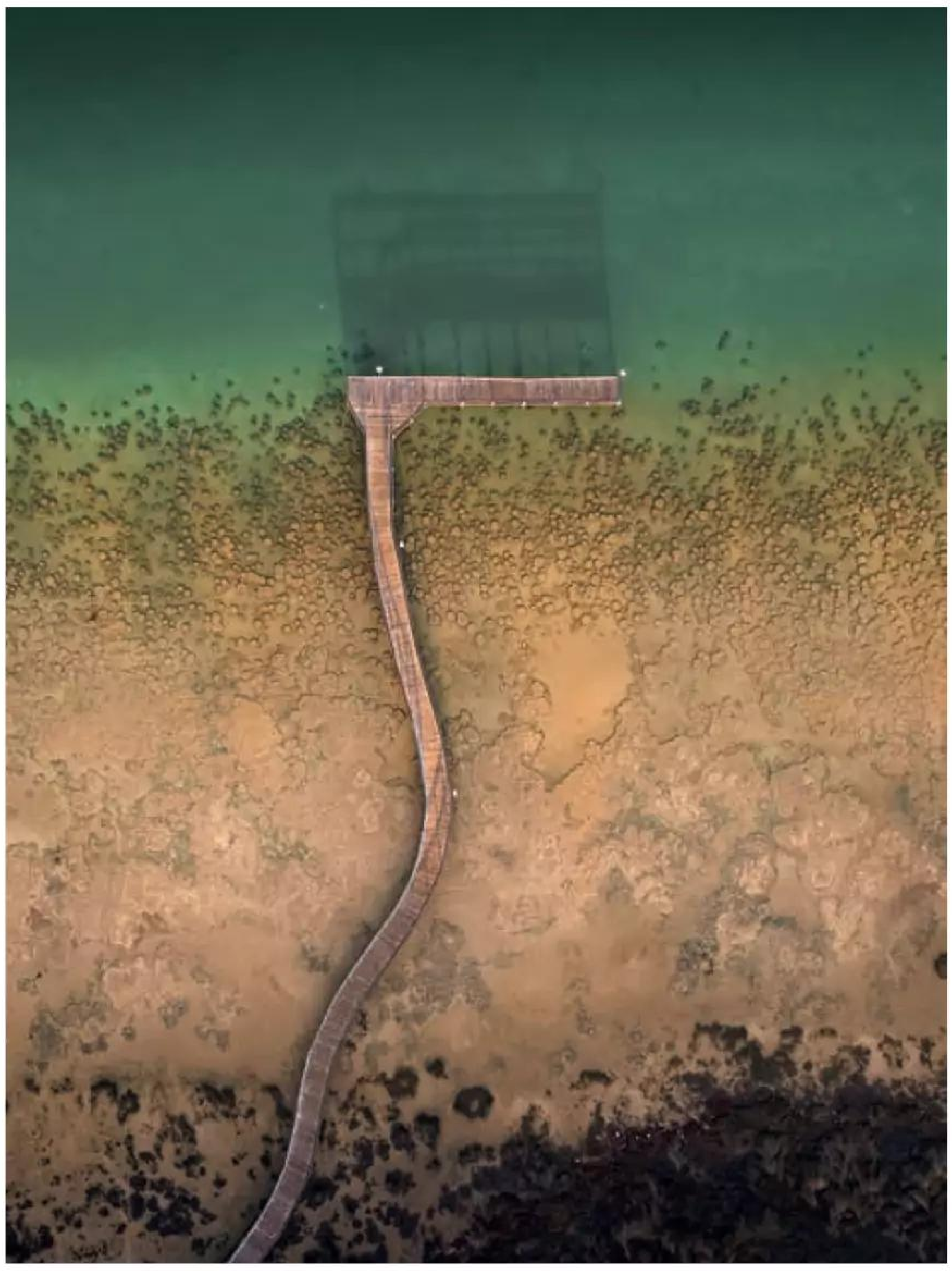
Rather than entering four images that tie together visually, Pannekoek says she sought to showcase four completely different landscapes, while still keeping them tied together through the connection of sharing the same region in south Western Australia. Her runner-up winning series includes images of Cranbrook Pink Lake, Lake Clifton Thrombolites, Greens Pool and Dwellingup Forest – providing viewers what she describes as a mini tour of the region from above.

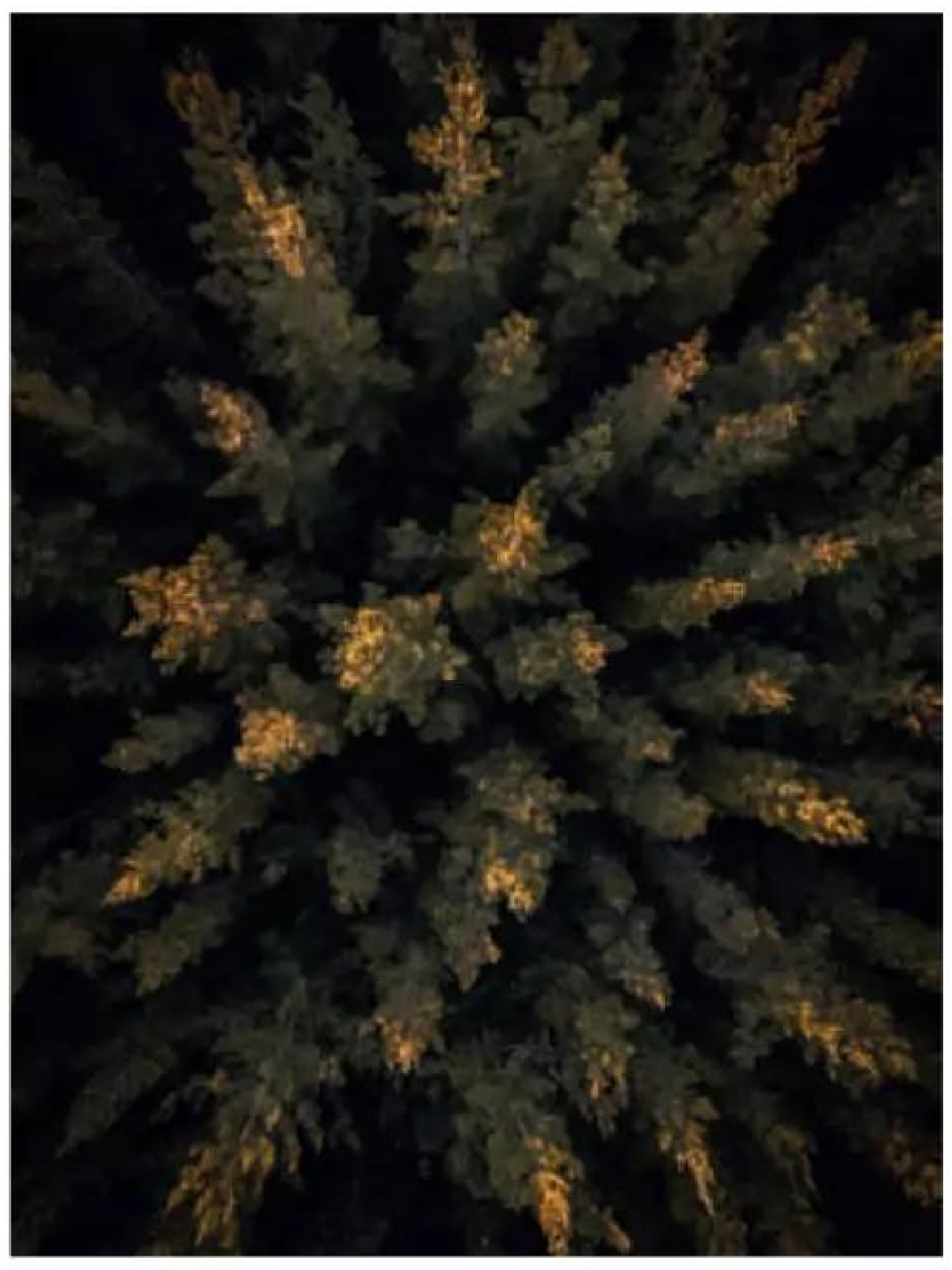
For our judges, the diversity of subject matter, colour and tones, all united by their geographical location, made for a captivating series that wouldn't be out of place in a tourism campaign.

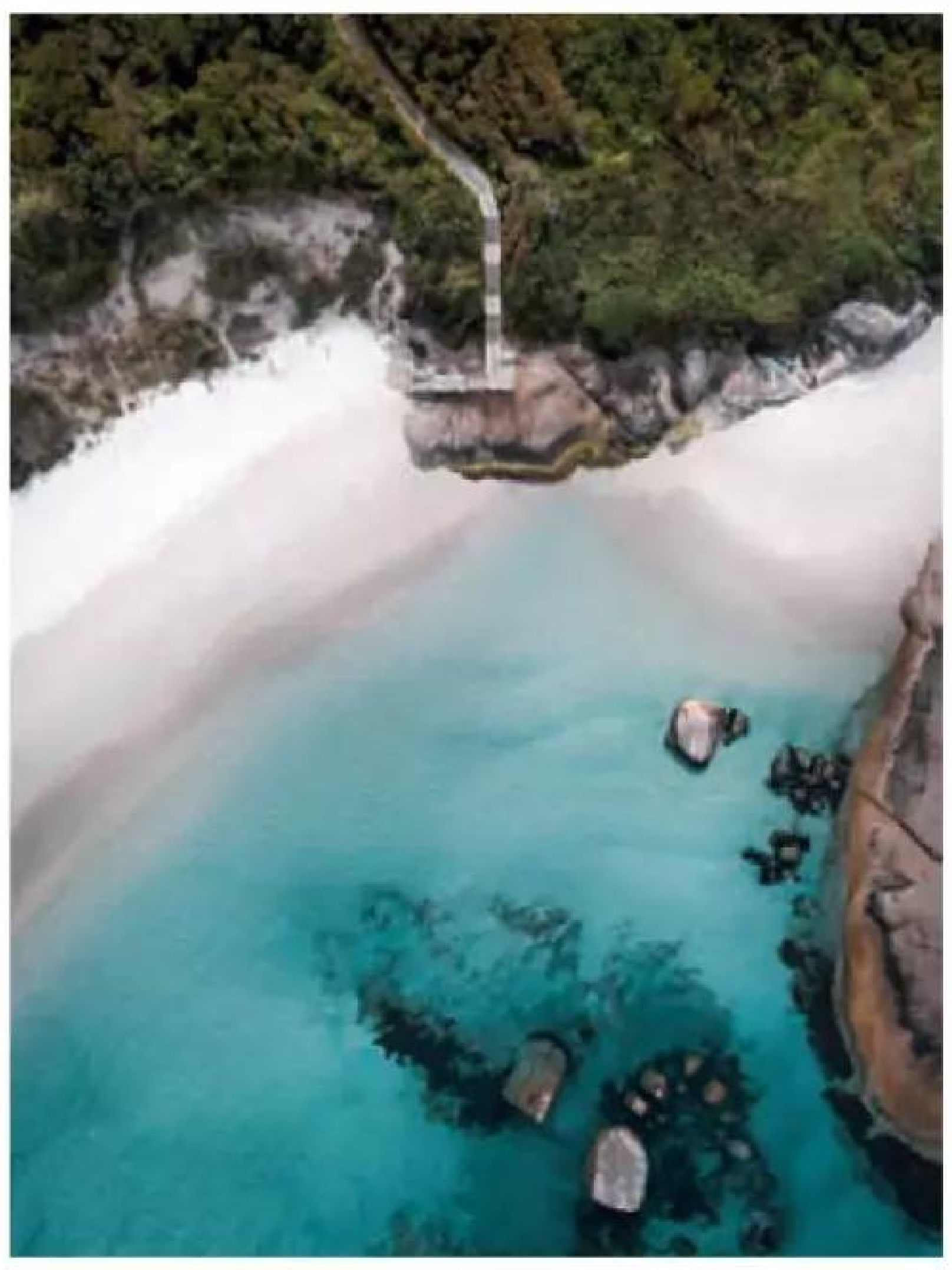
WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

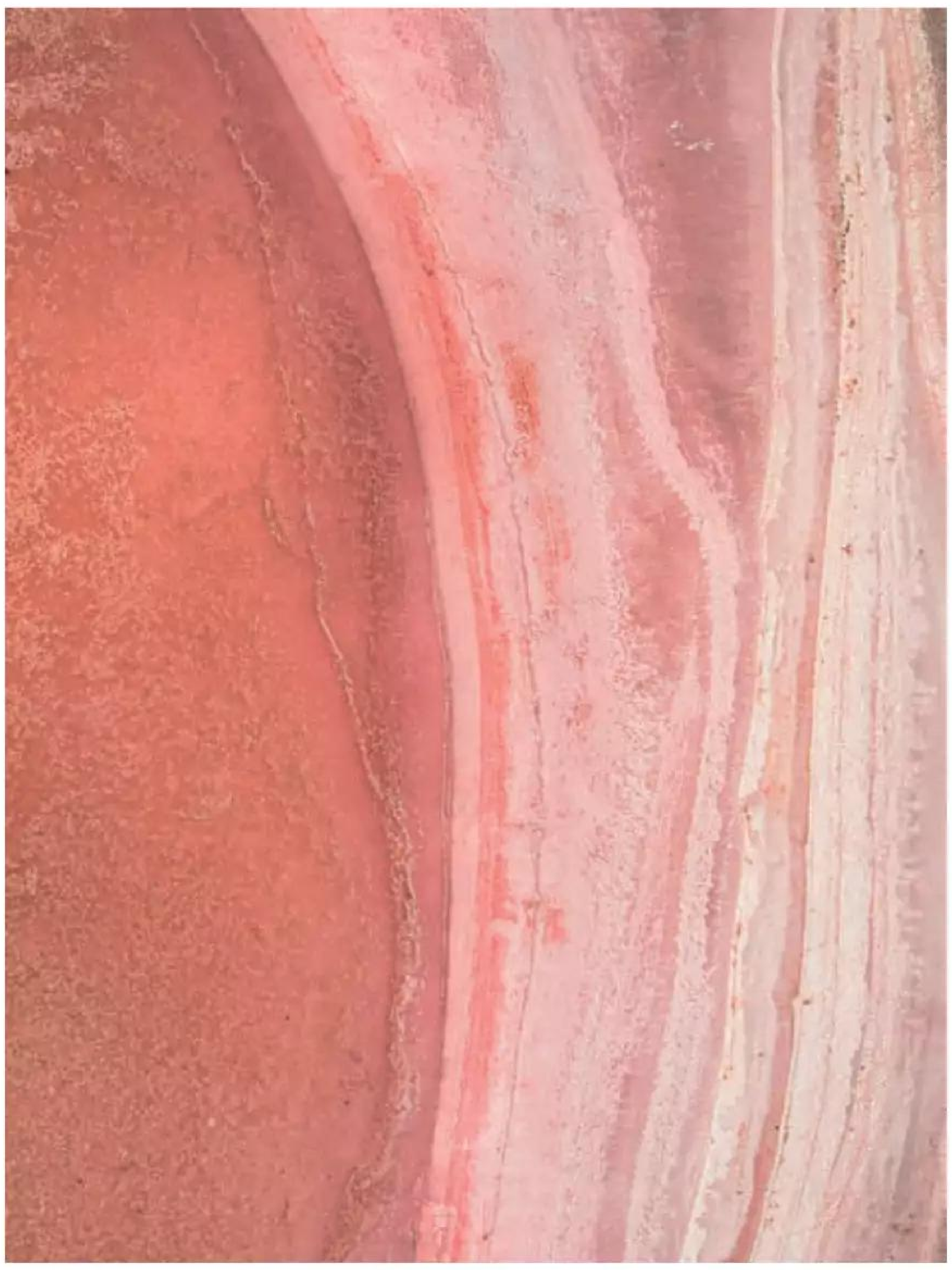
WILL PATINO: One of the challenges with top-down aerial photography is being able to create images that have depth and relatability for the viewer. Here, Rachel has done a great job in achieving both by paying great attention to angular light, contrast and a variety of subject matter. Each image is strong on its own and as a portfolio, the series works well to showcase variety but still remain cohesive.

PRIZE: $200 Ted's Cameras voucher.



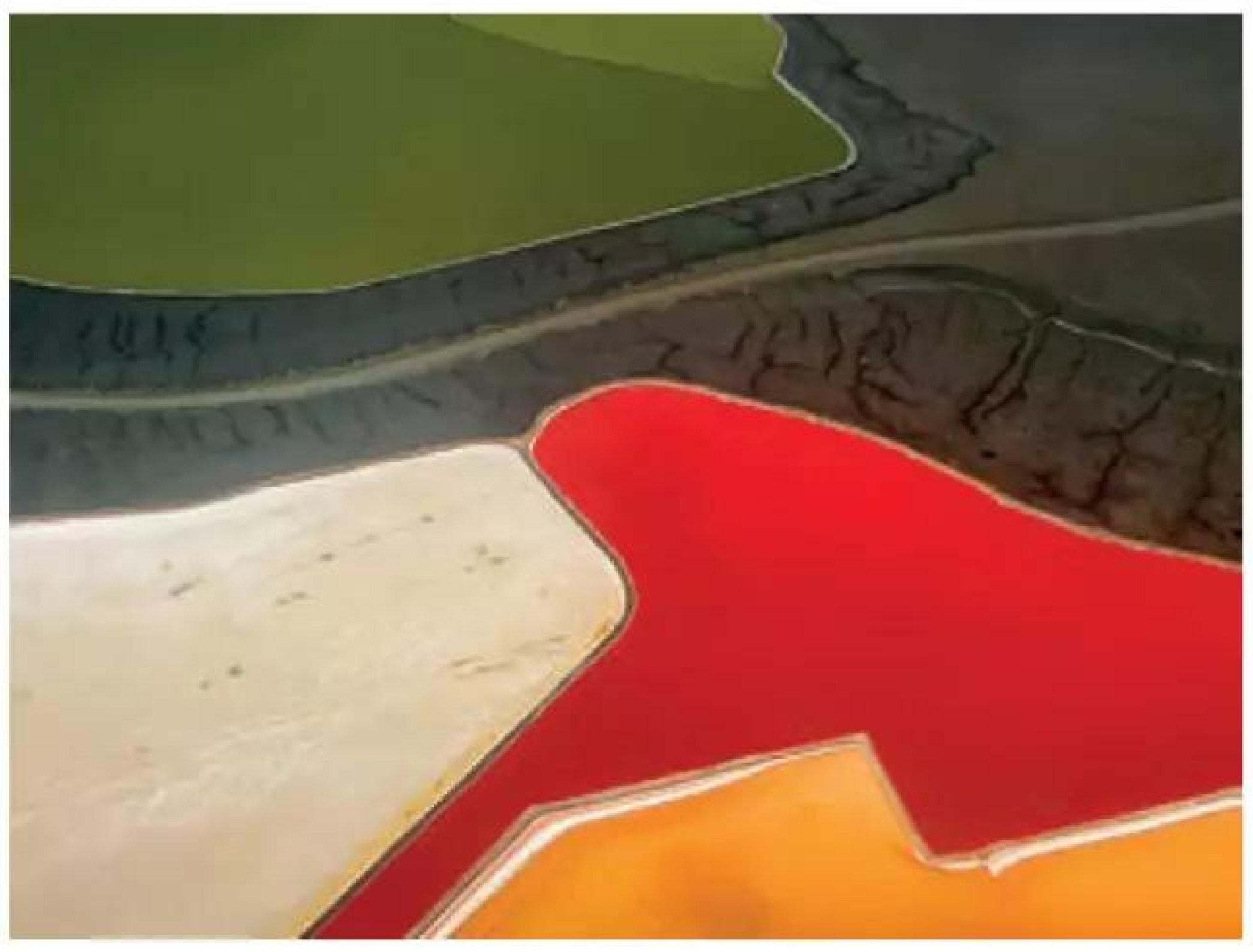


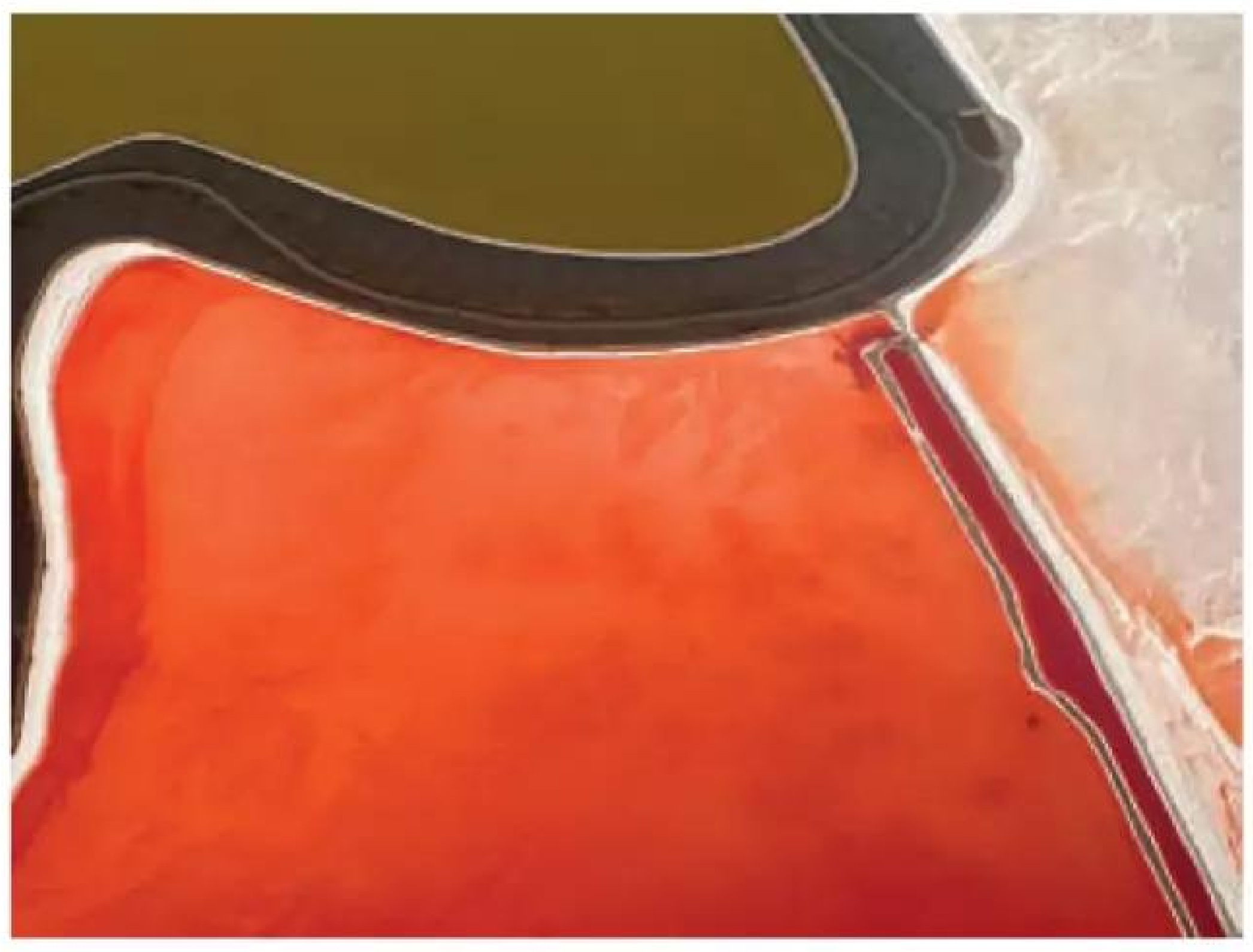




3. ABHIK BASU

COLOURS OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY SALT PONDS



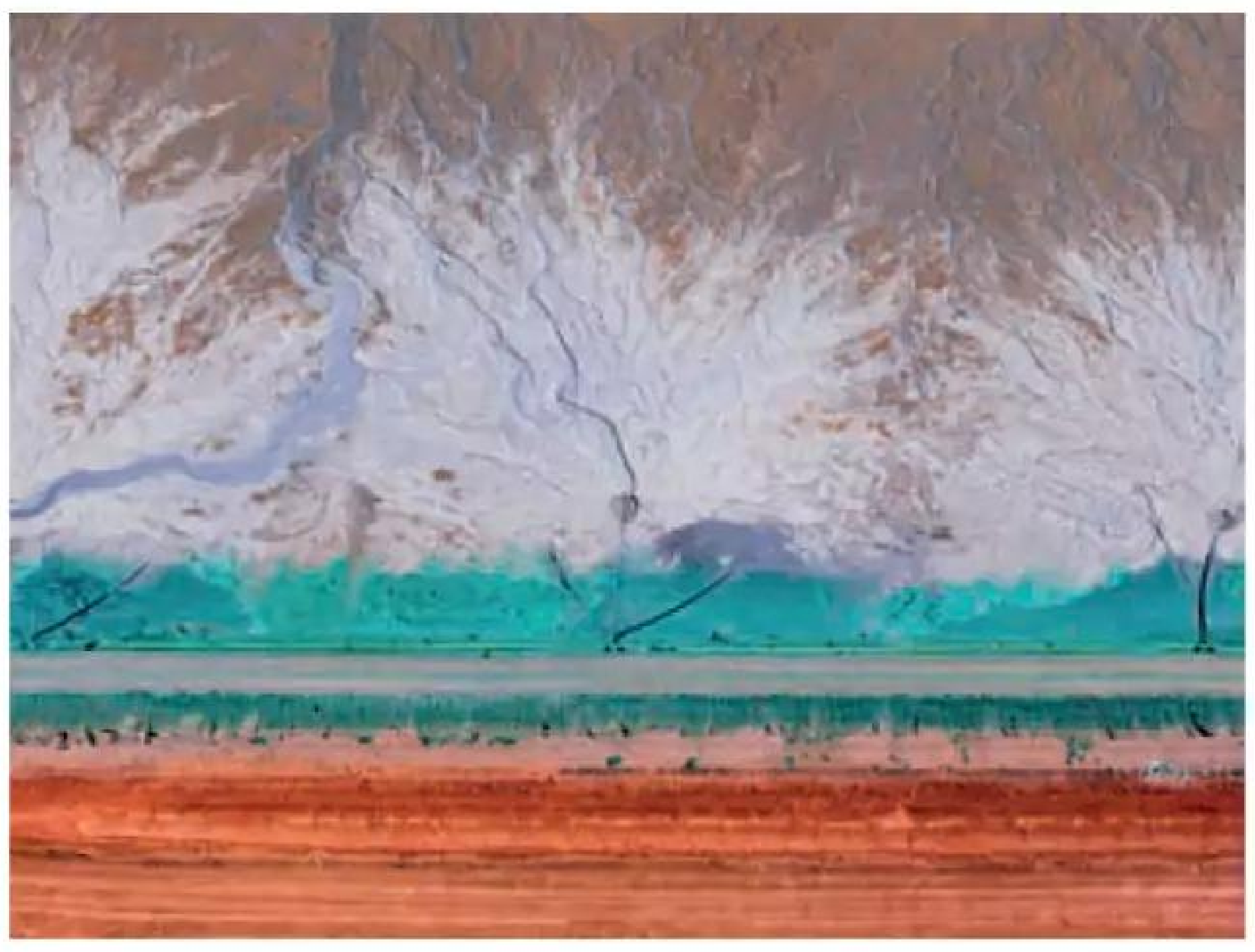


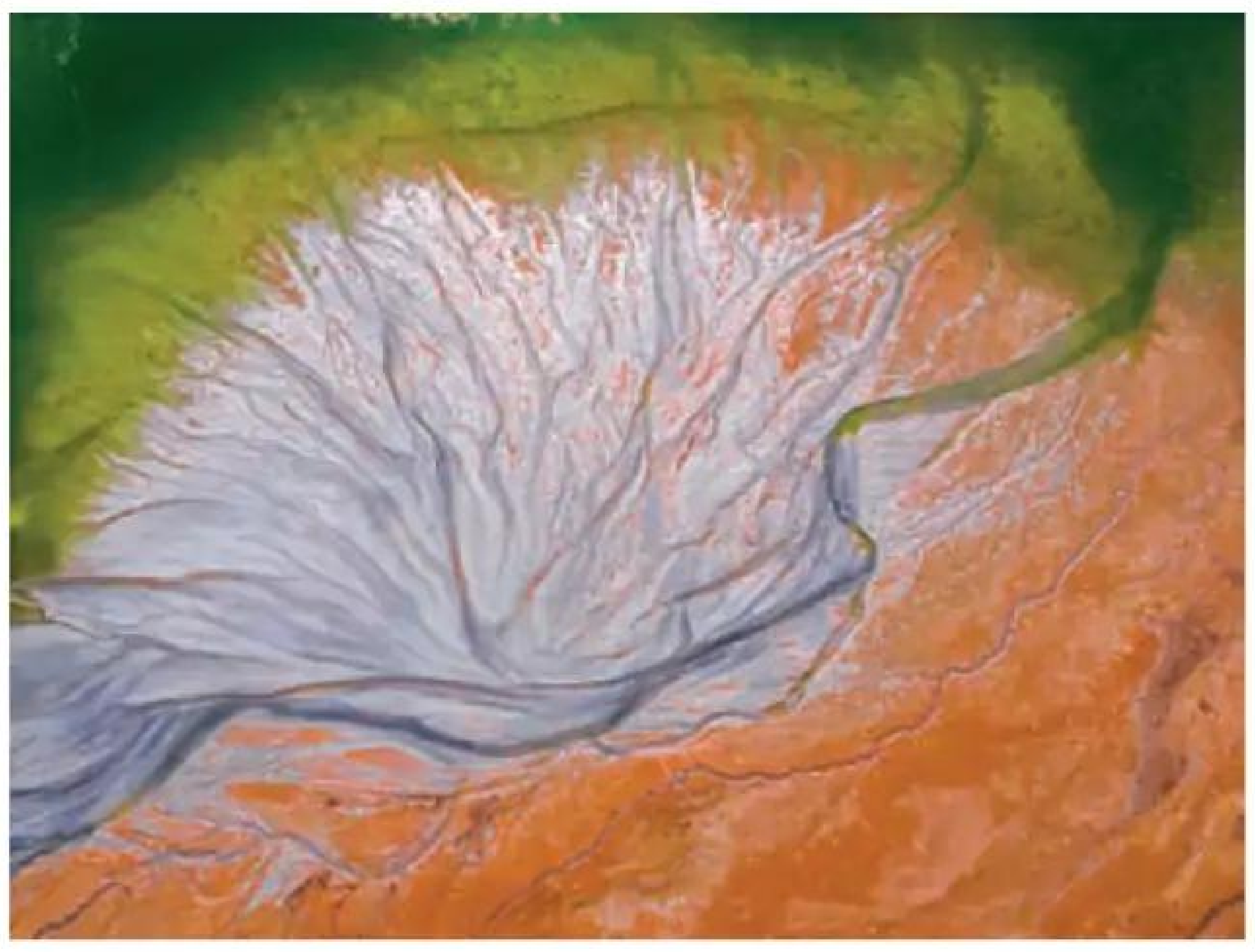
4. KIM TALENTO

INDUSTRIAL SYMPHONY

5. JAMES FULTON

MINING MODERN ART



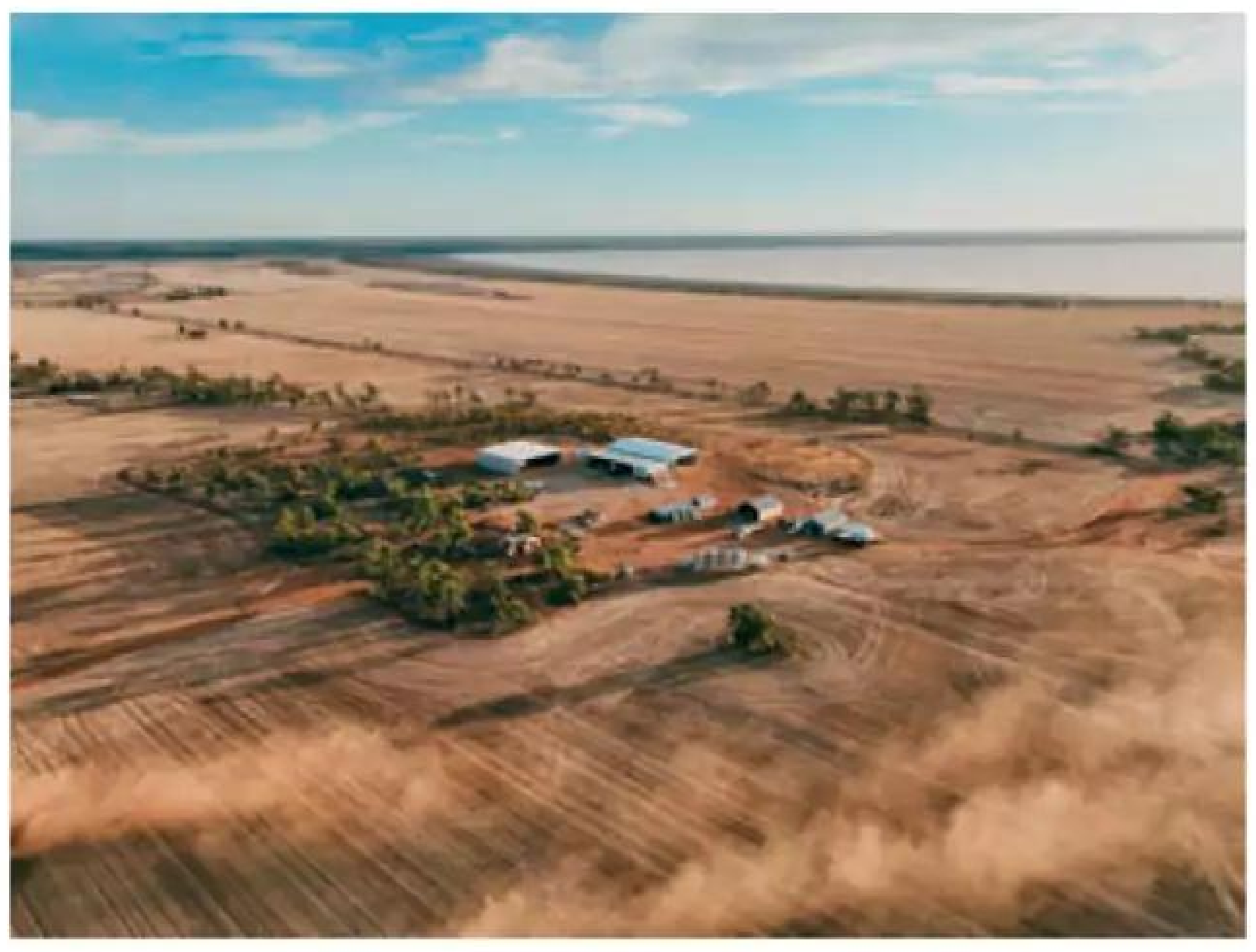


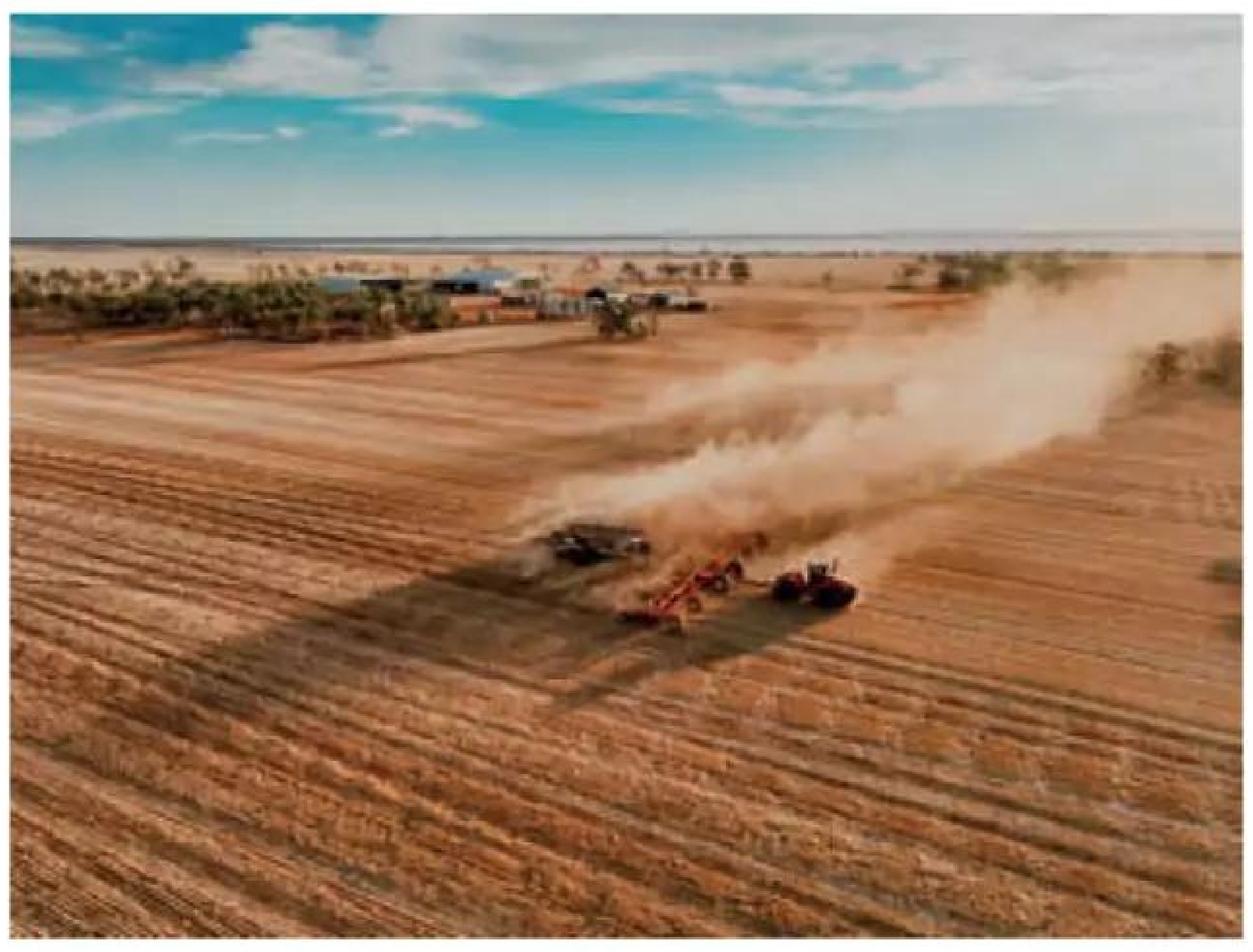
SPONSORS

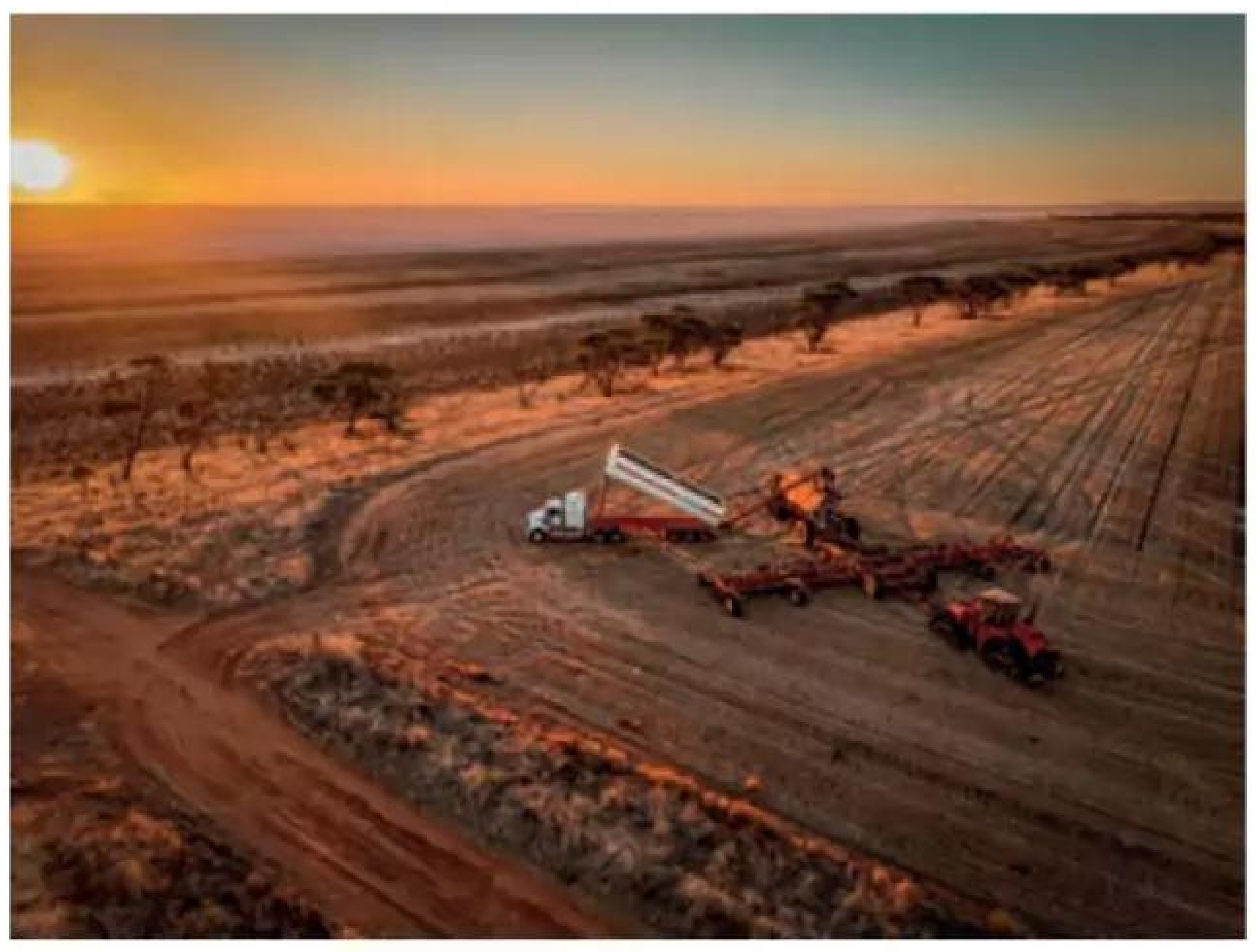
KUDOS CAMERAS · ILFORD · the Brownell Effect · GIGABYTE · PhotobookSHOP · Retouch me · Billingham · JOBO · CURA made in Japan · AORUS · Western Digital.

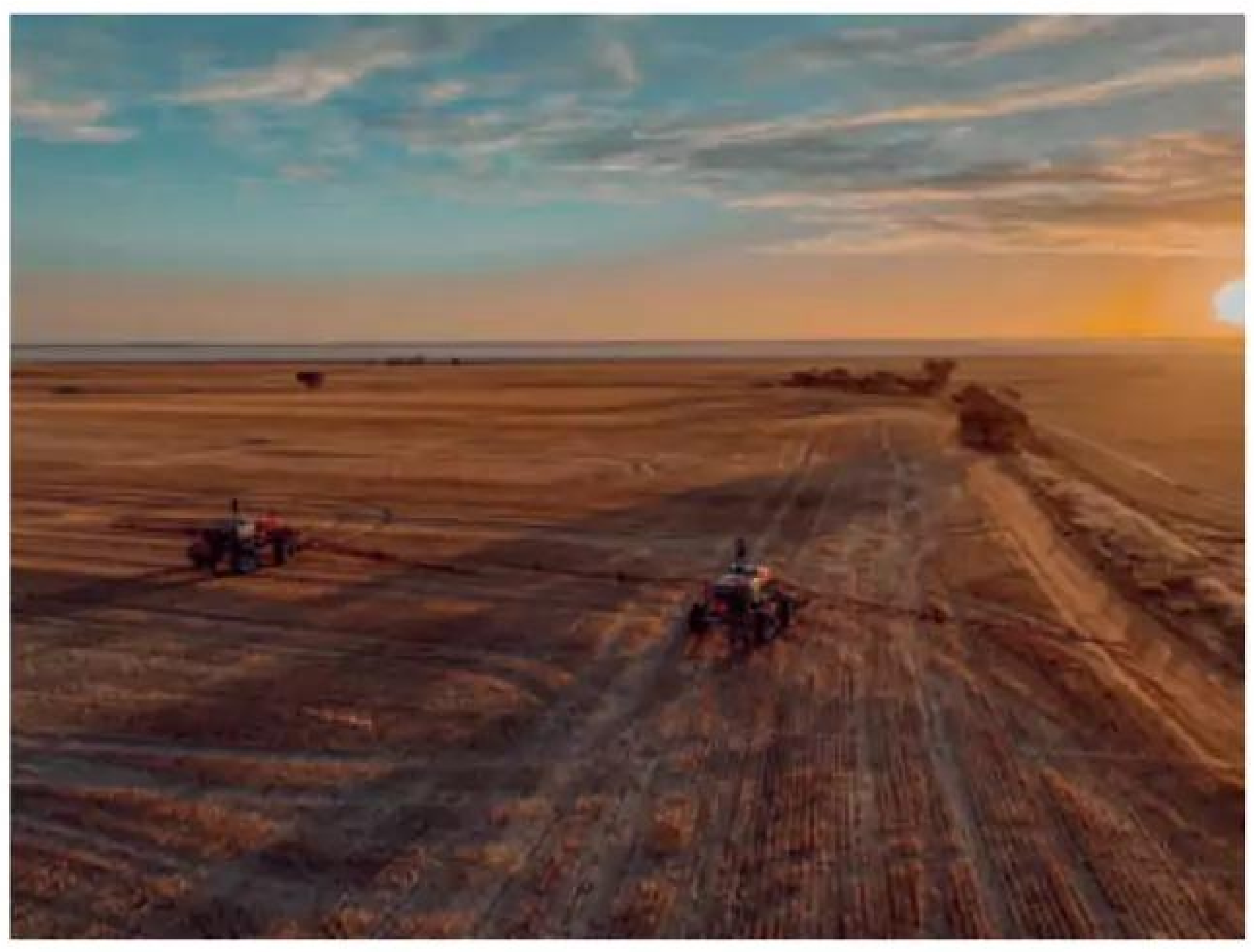
6. ALEXANDRIA HAMMER

LAKESIDE FARMING



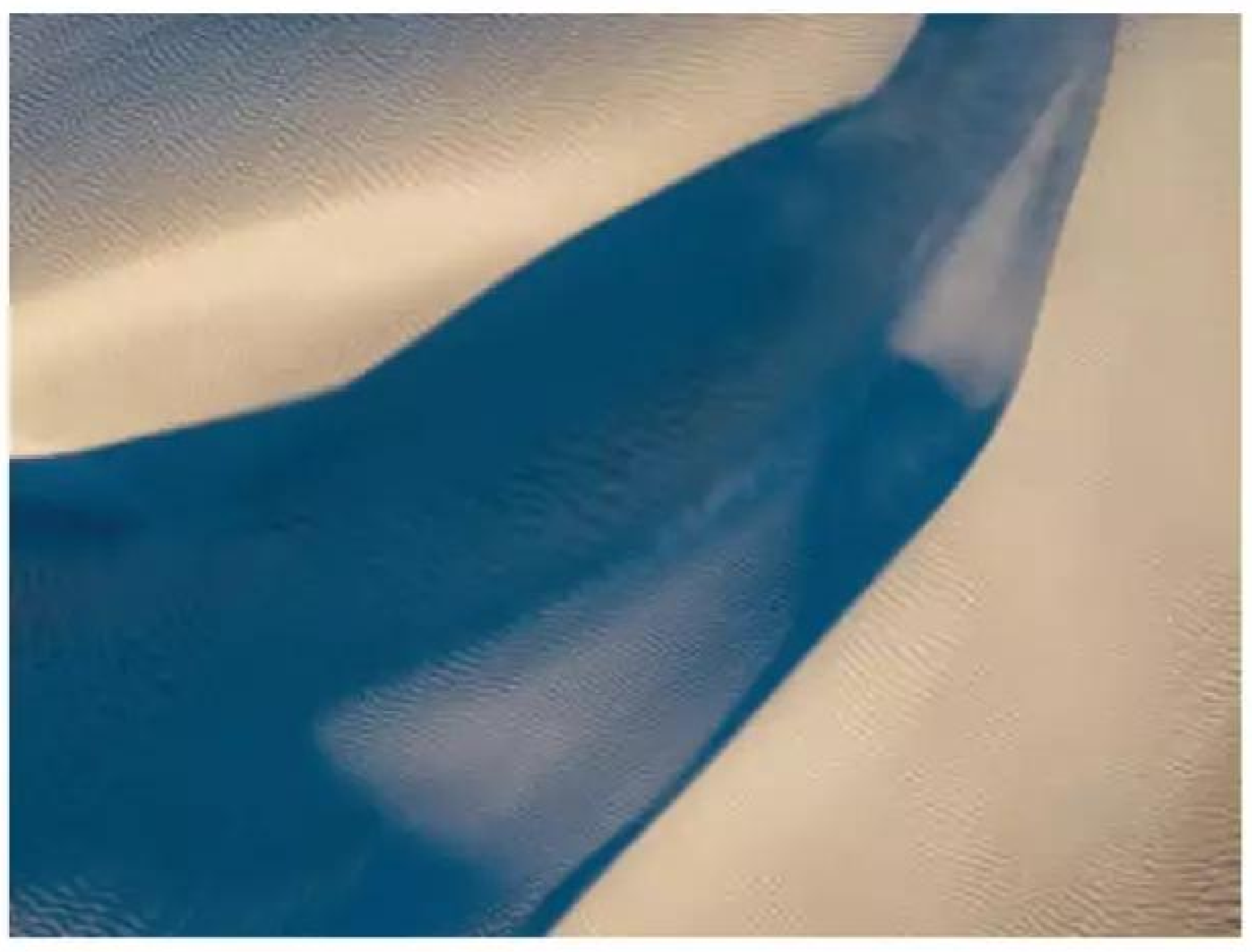


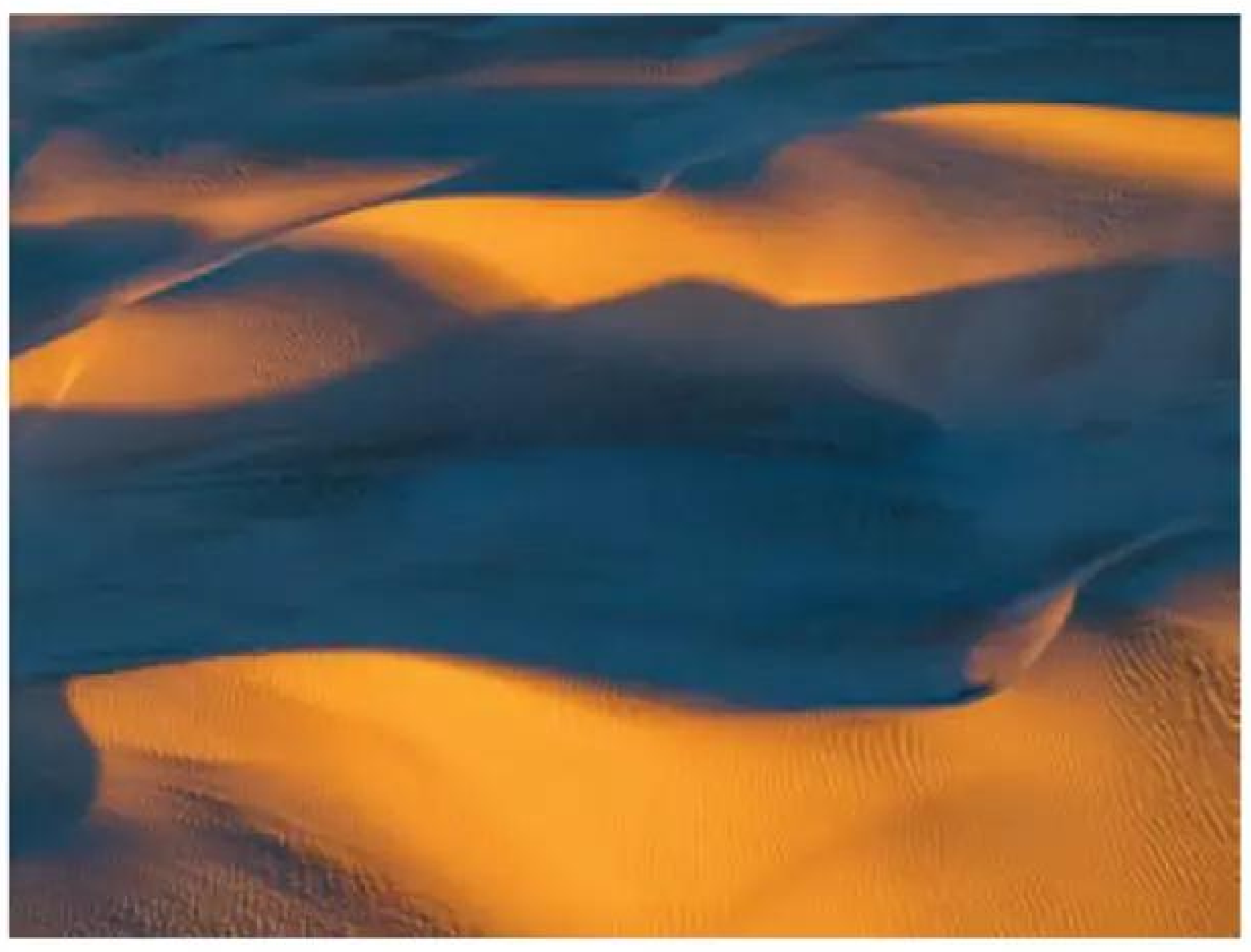


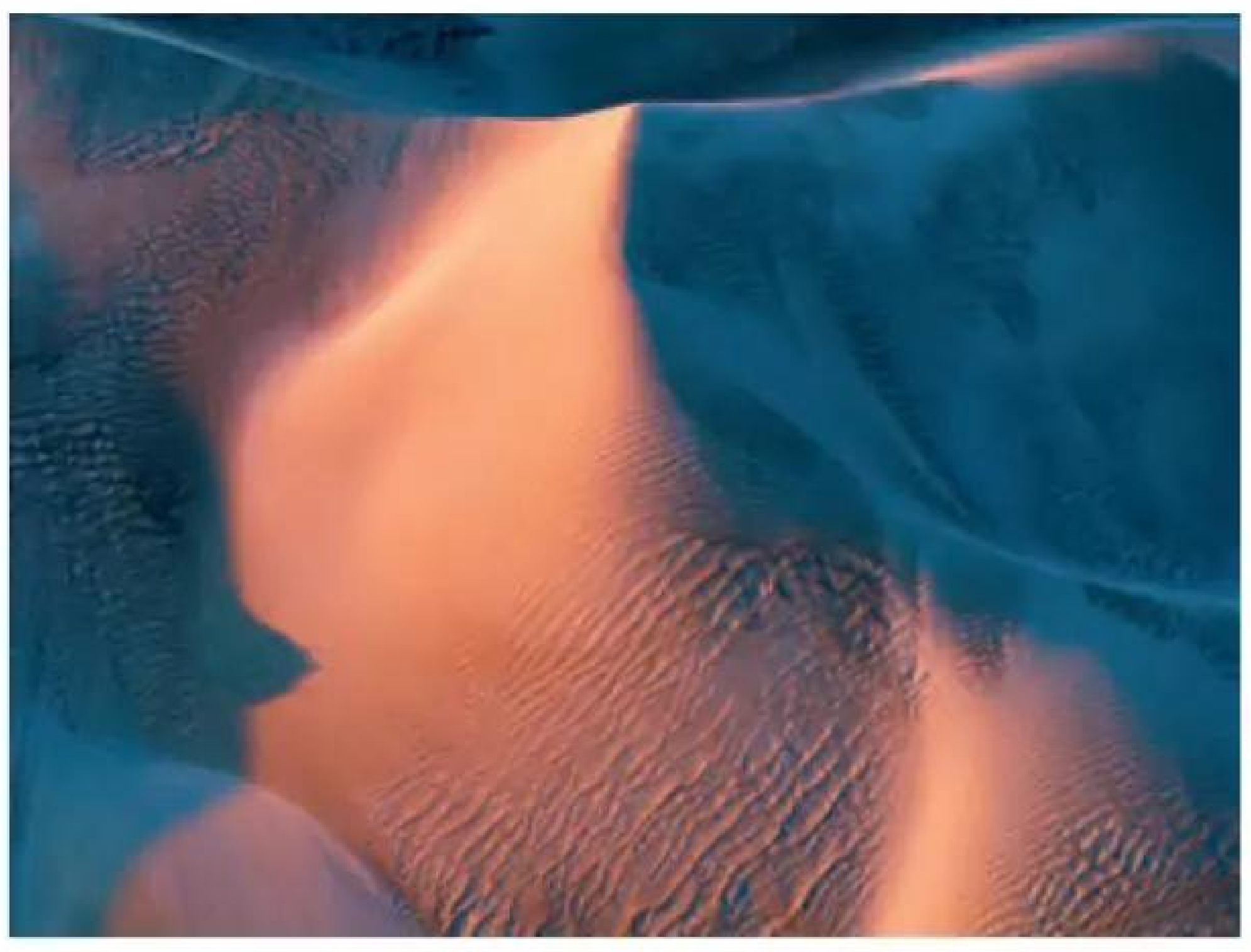


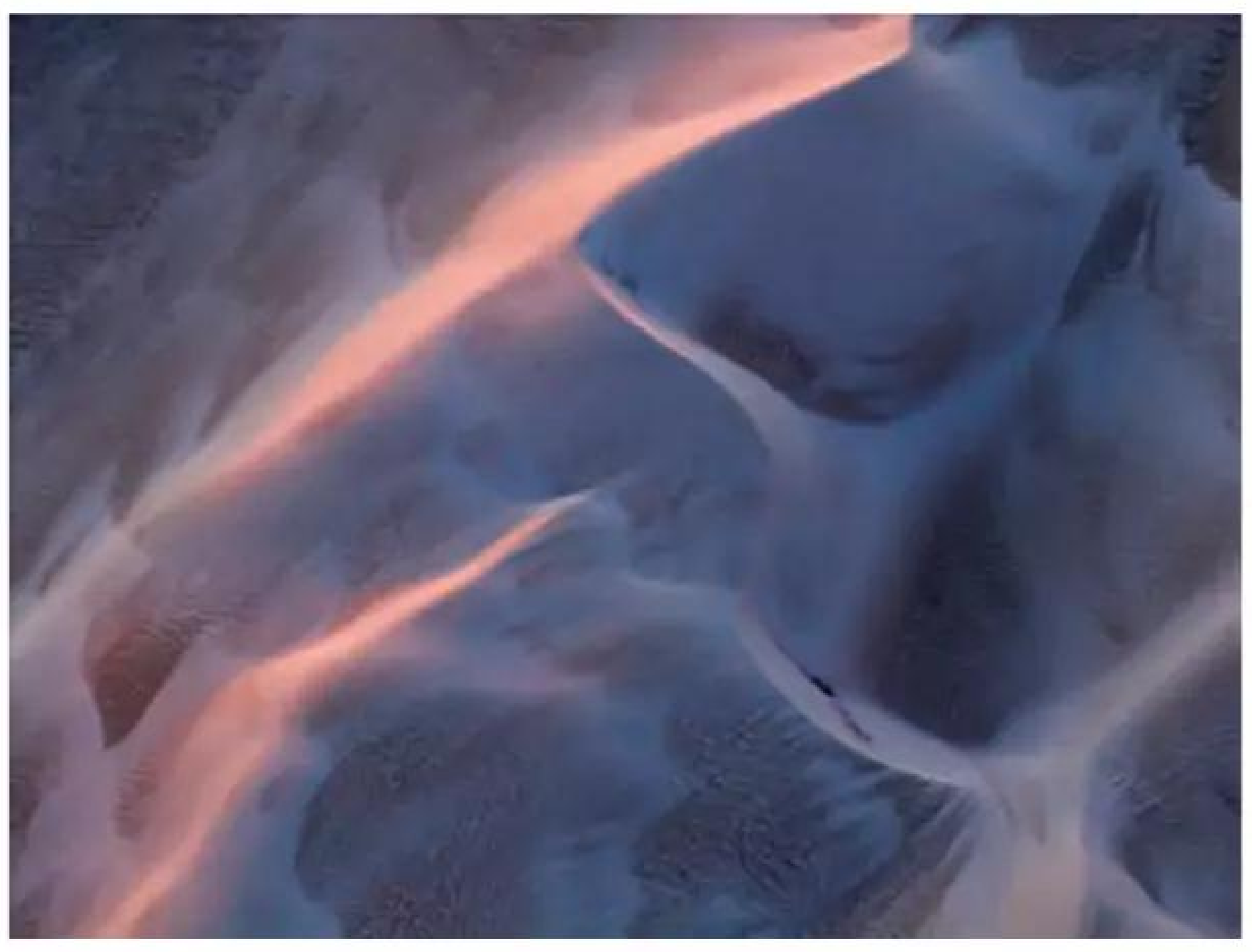
7. JAMES FULTON

CHANGING LIGHT



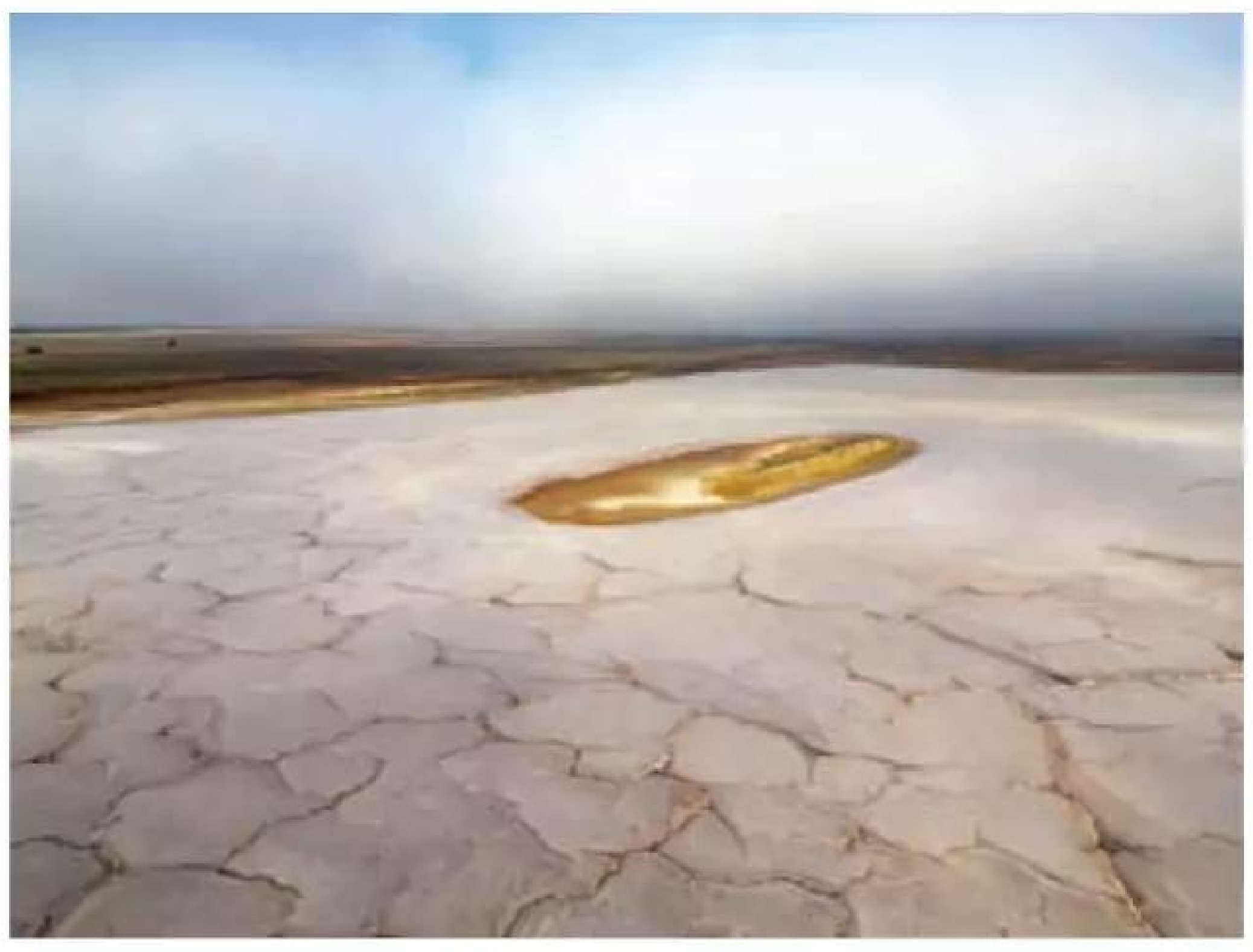


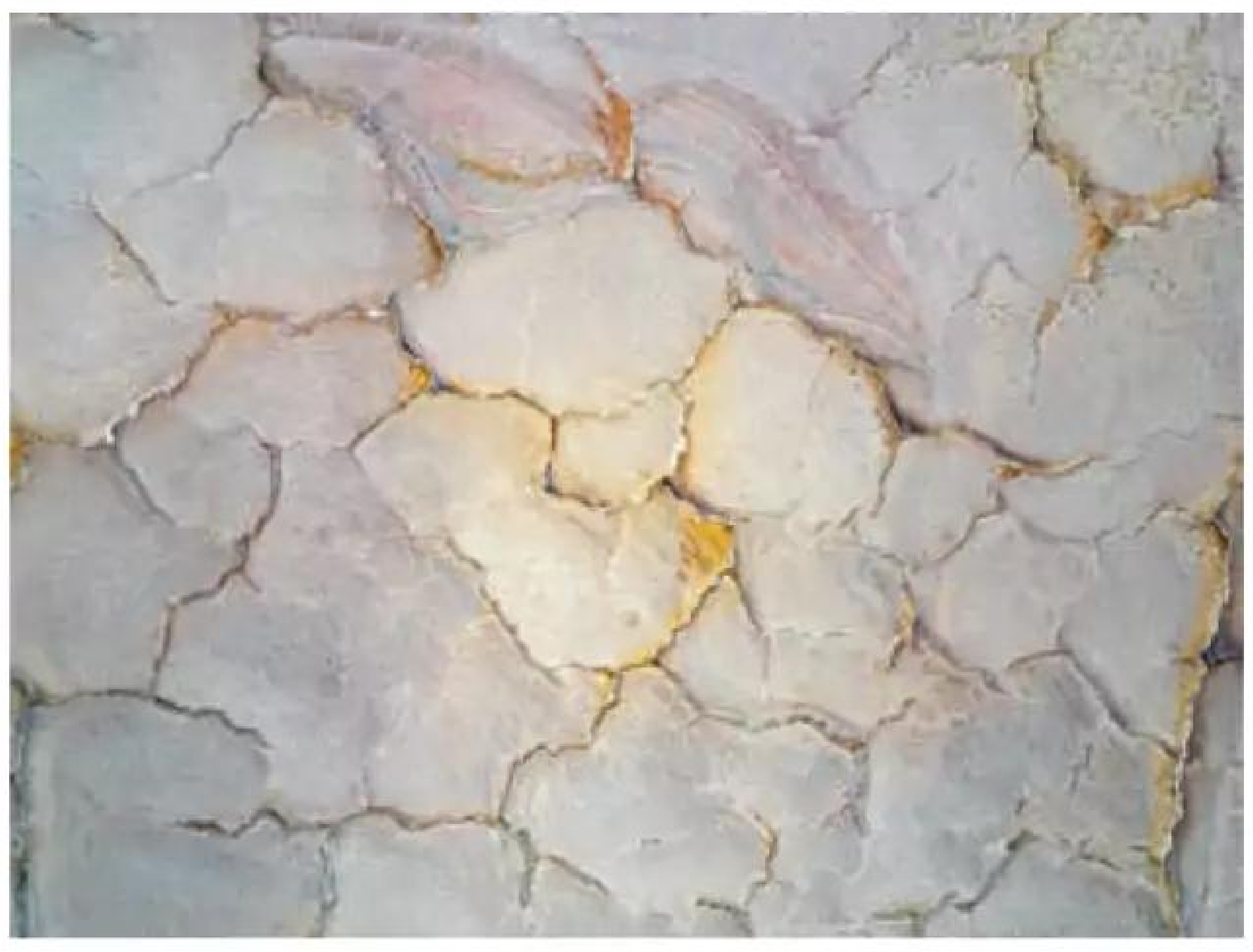


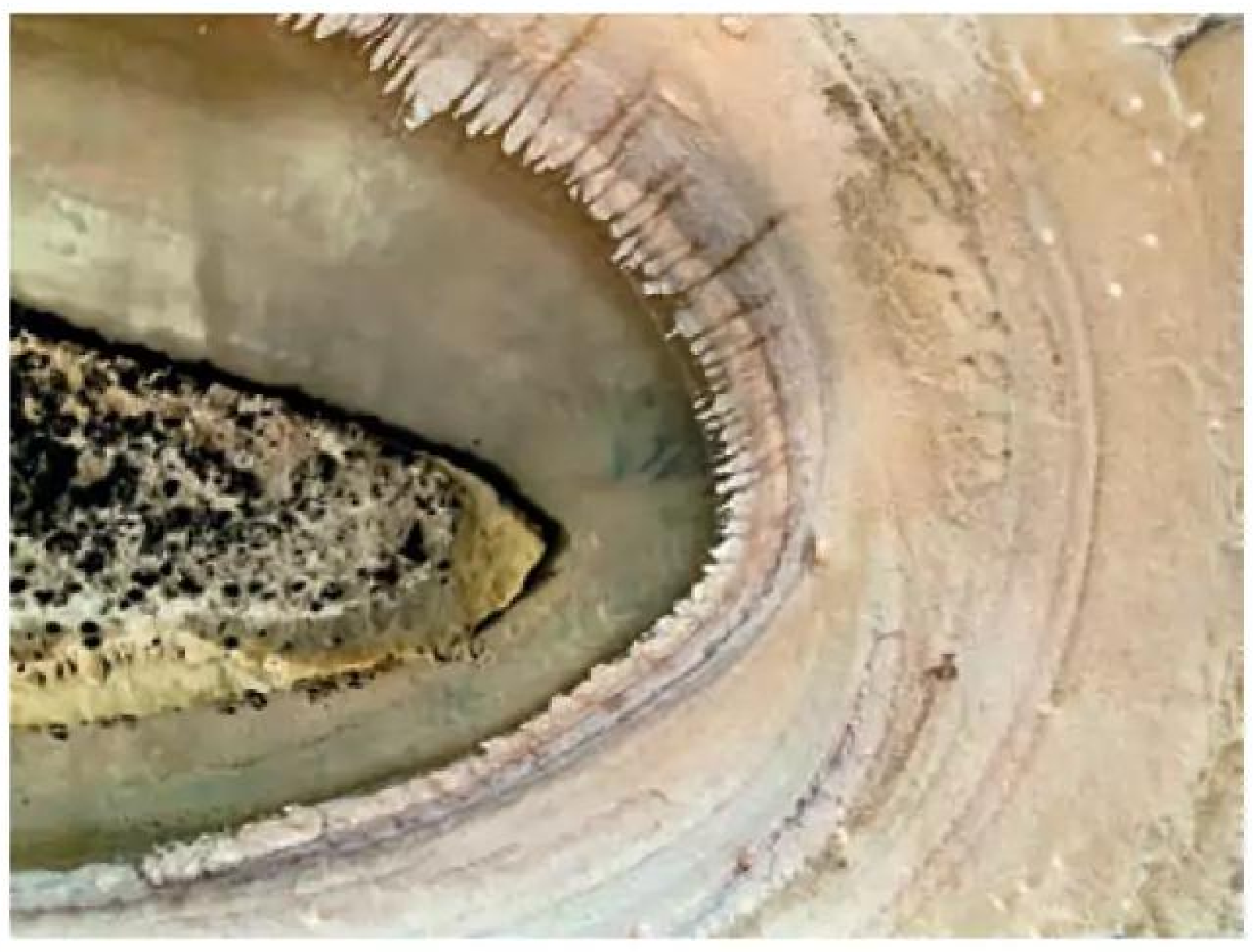


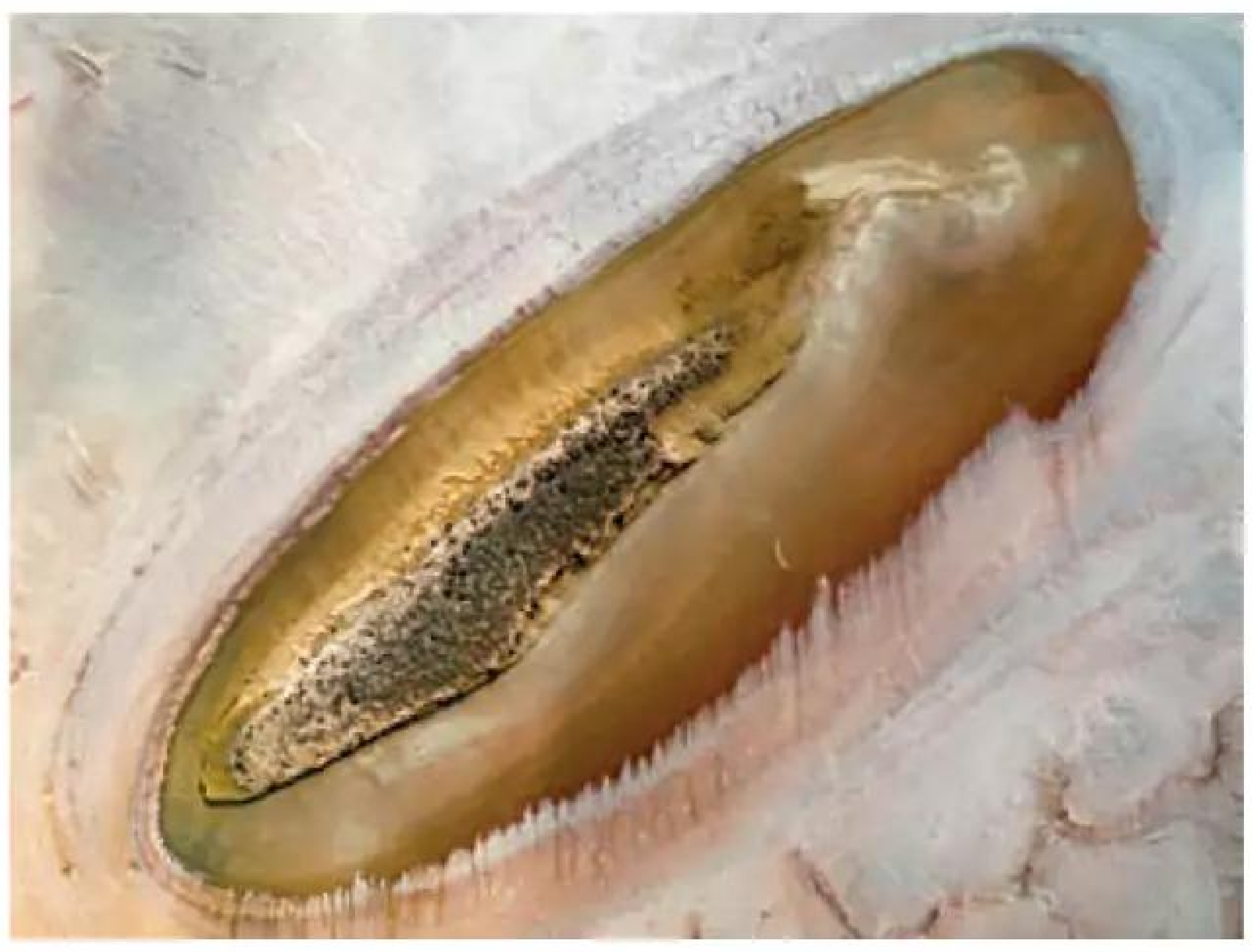
8. LINDA BROWN

SUSPENDED IN SALT



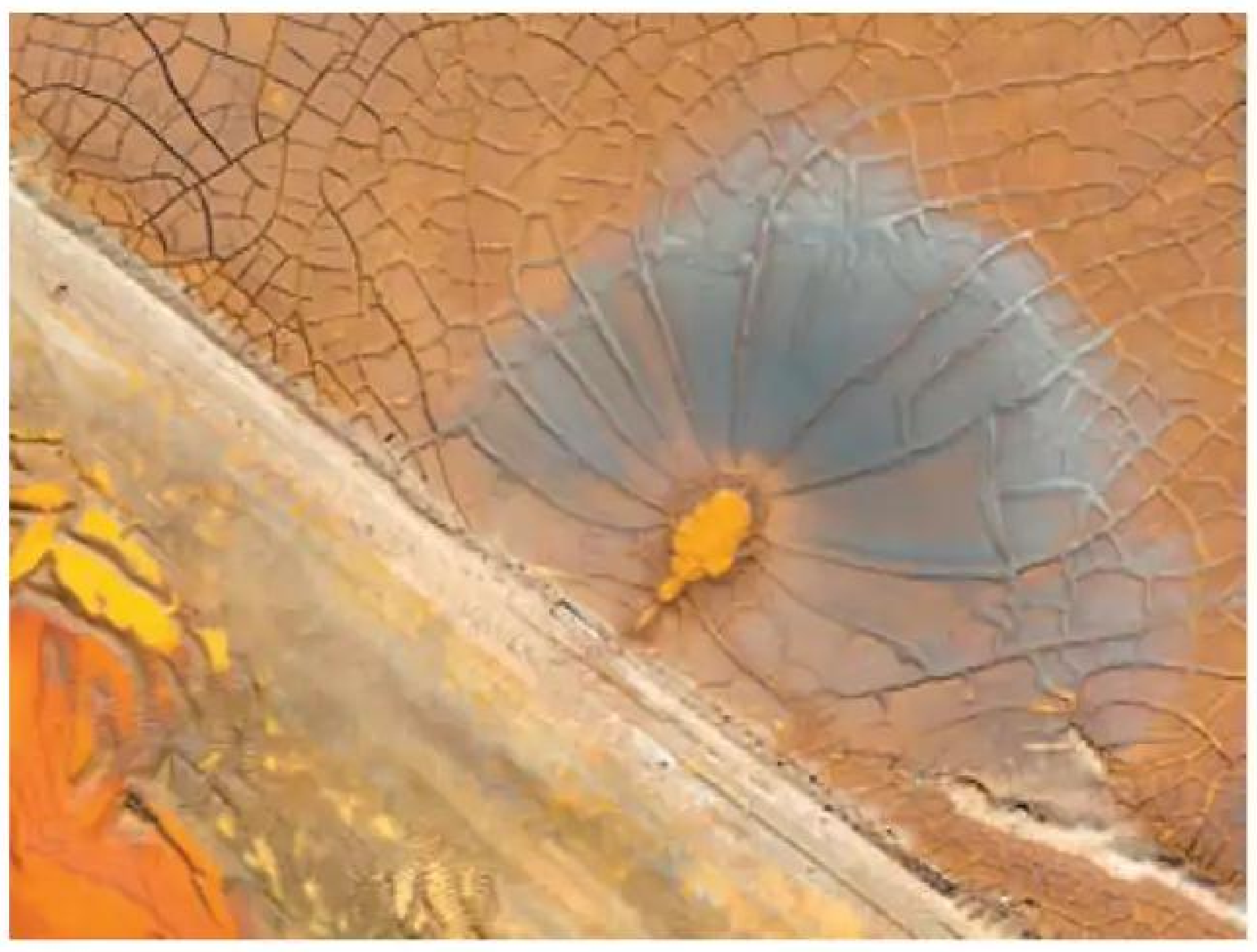


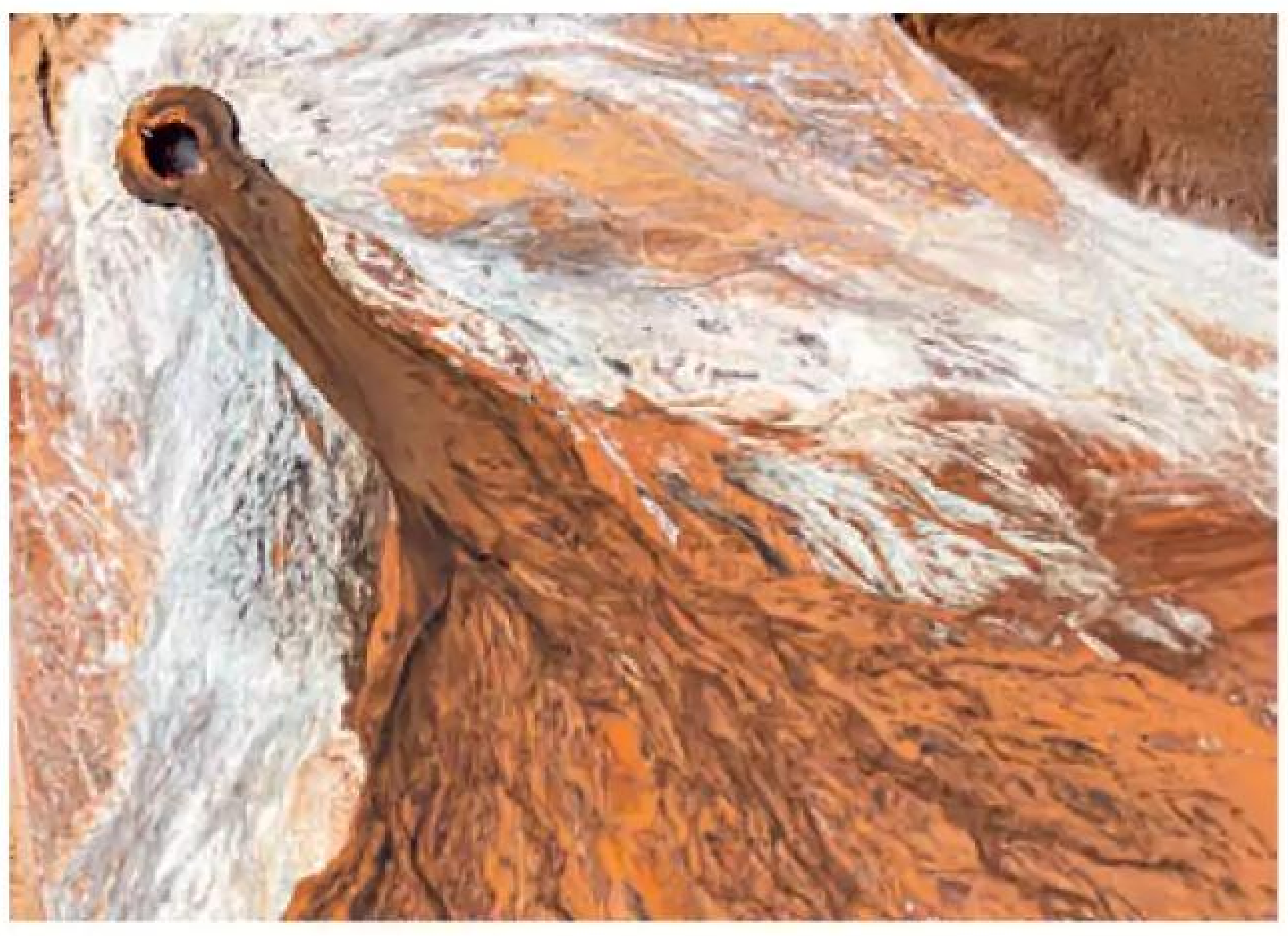


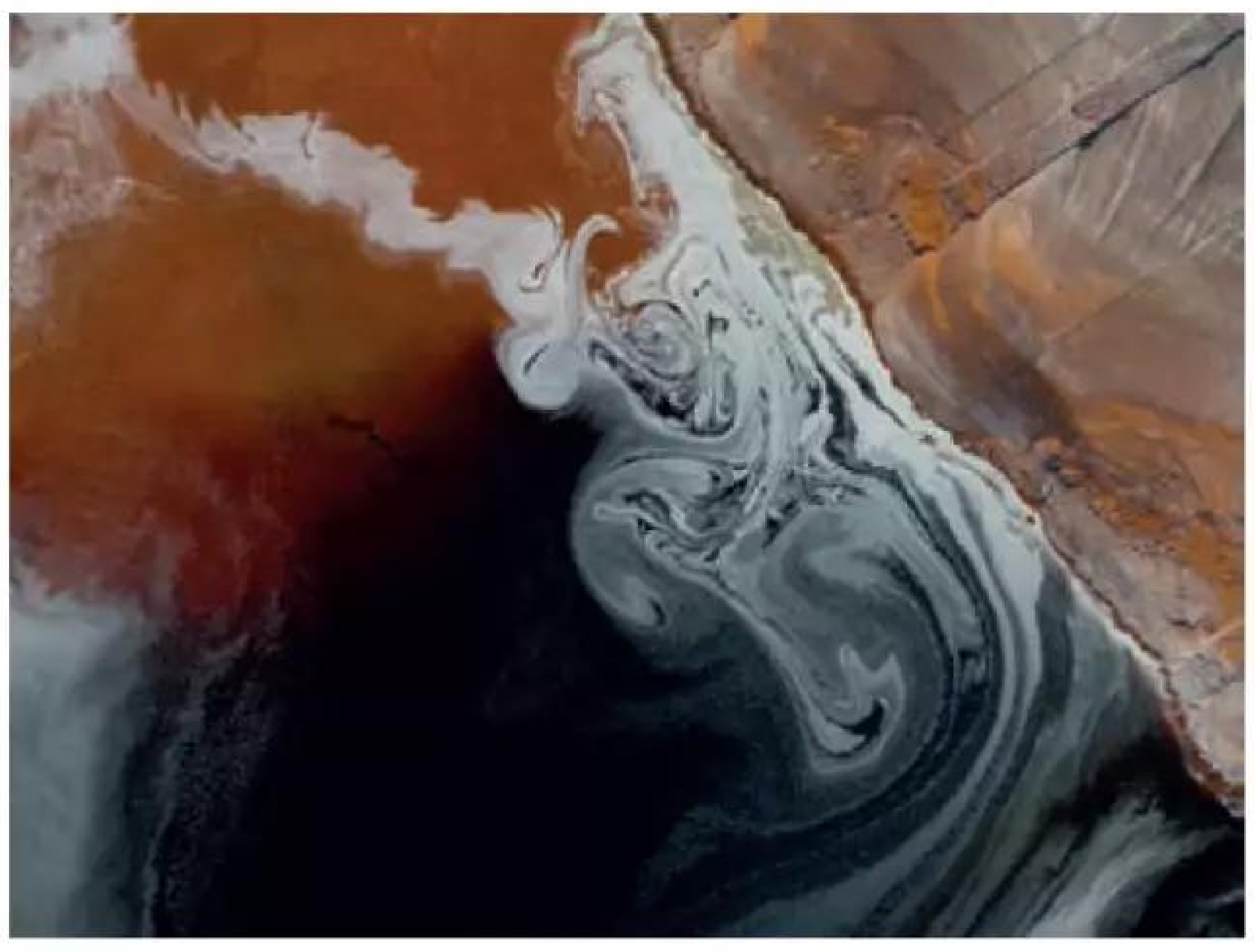


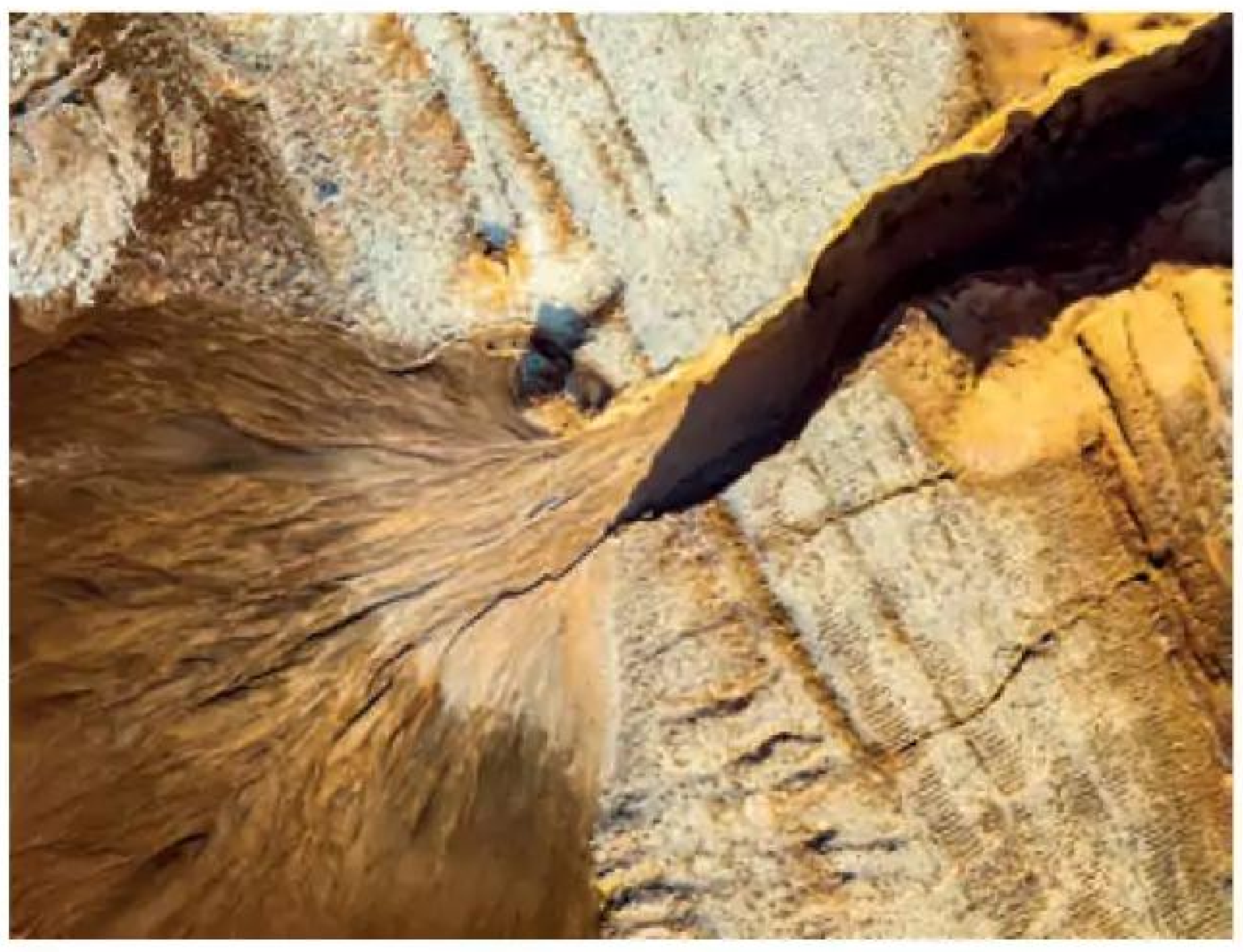
9. JACKIE WILSON

TAILINGS



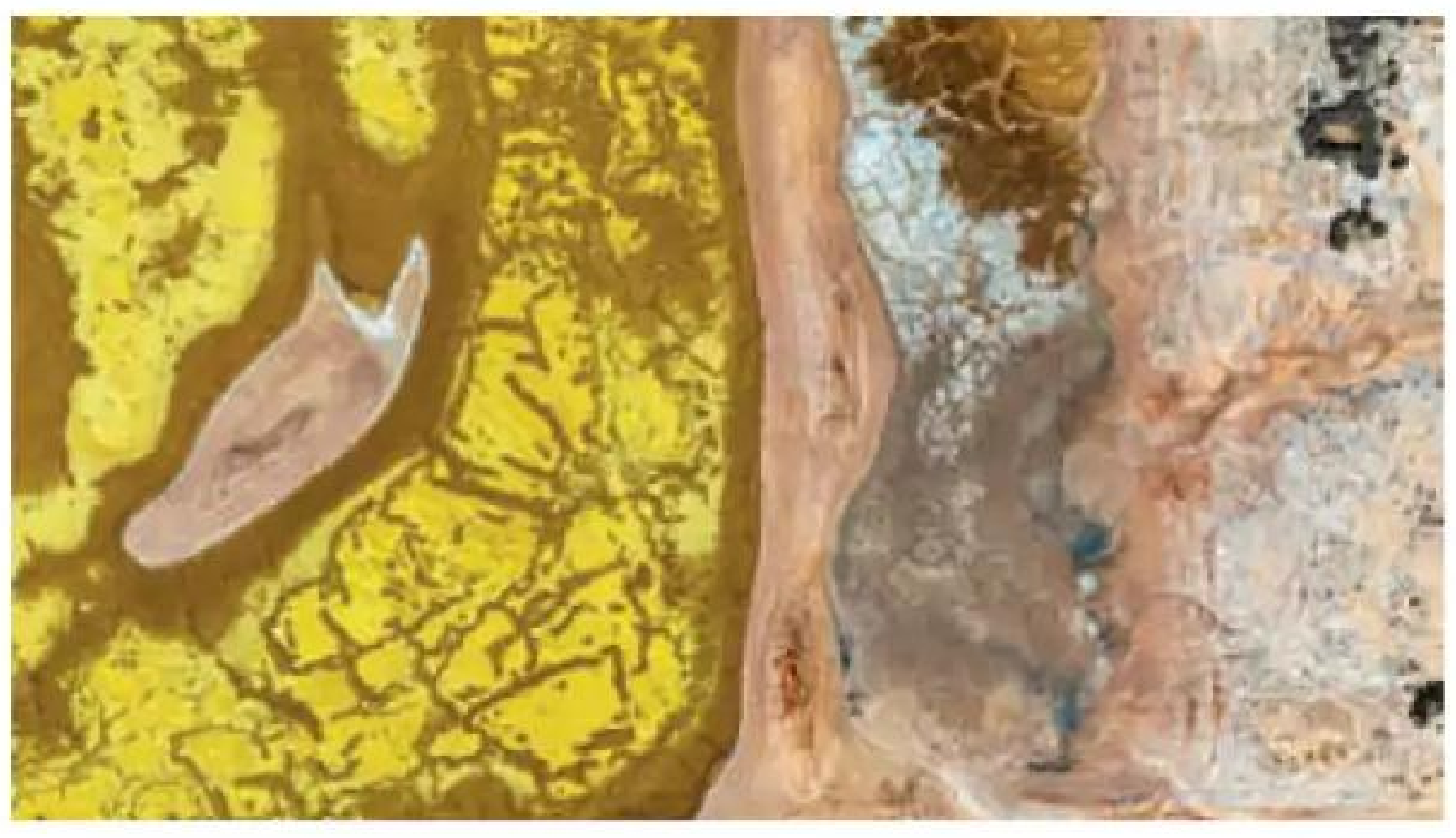


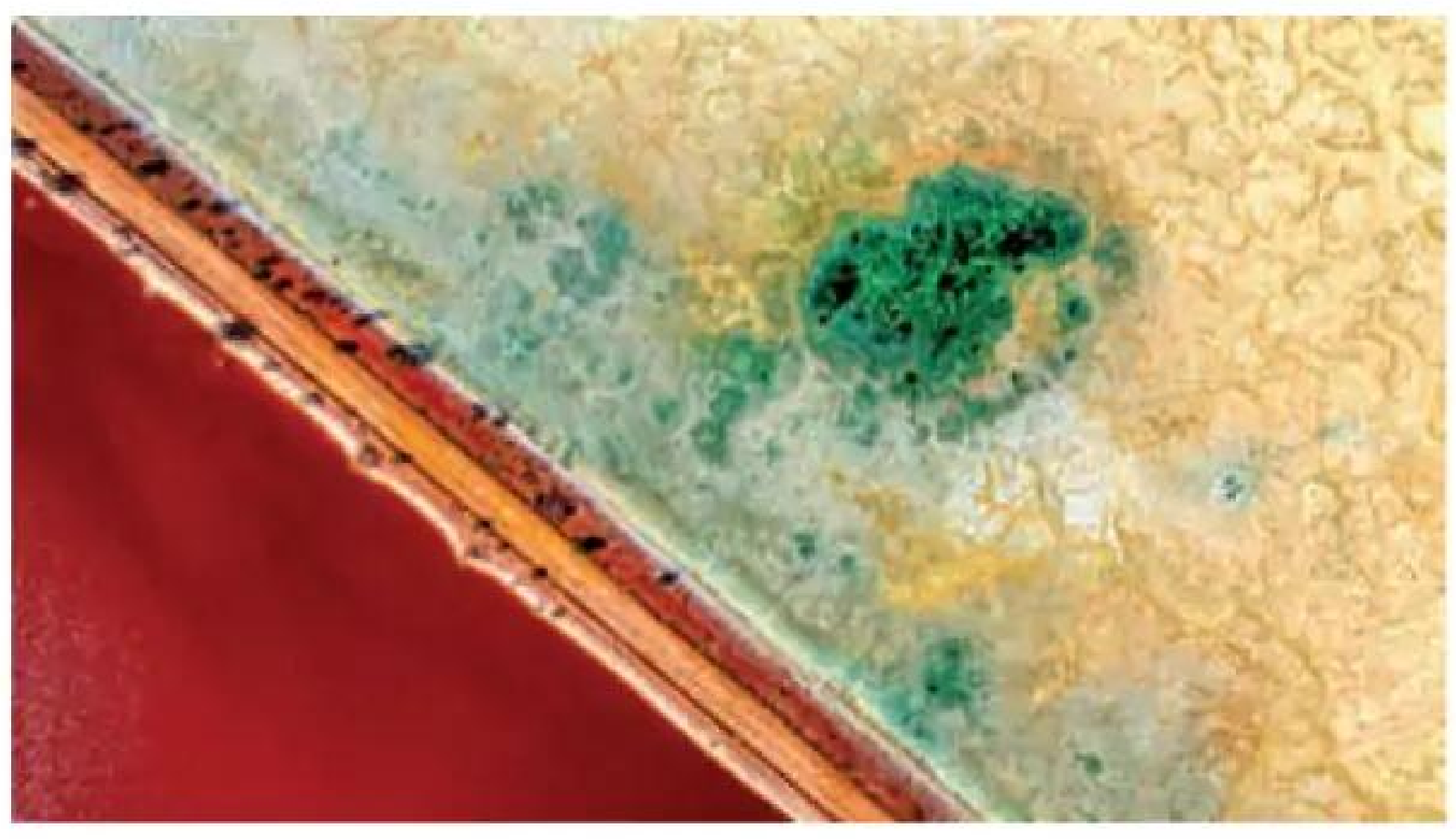


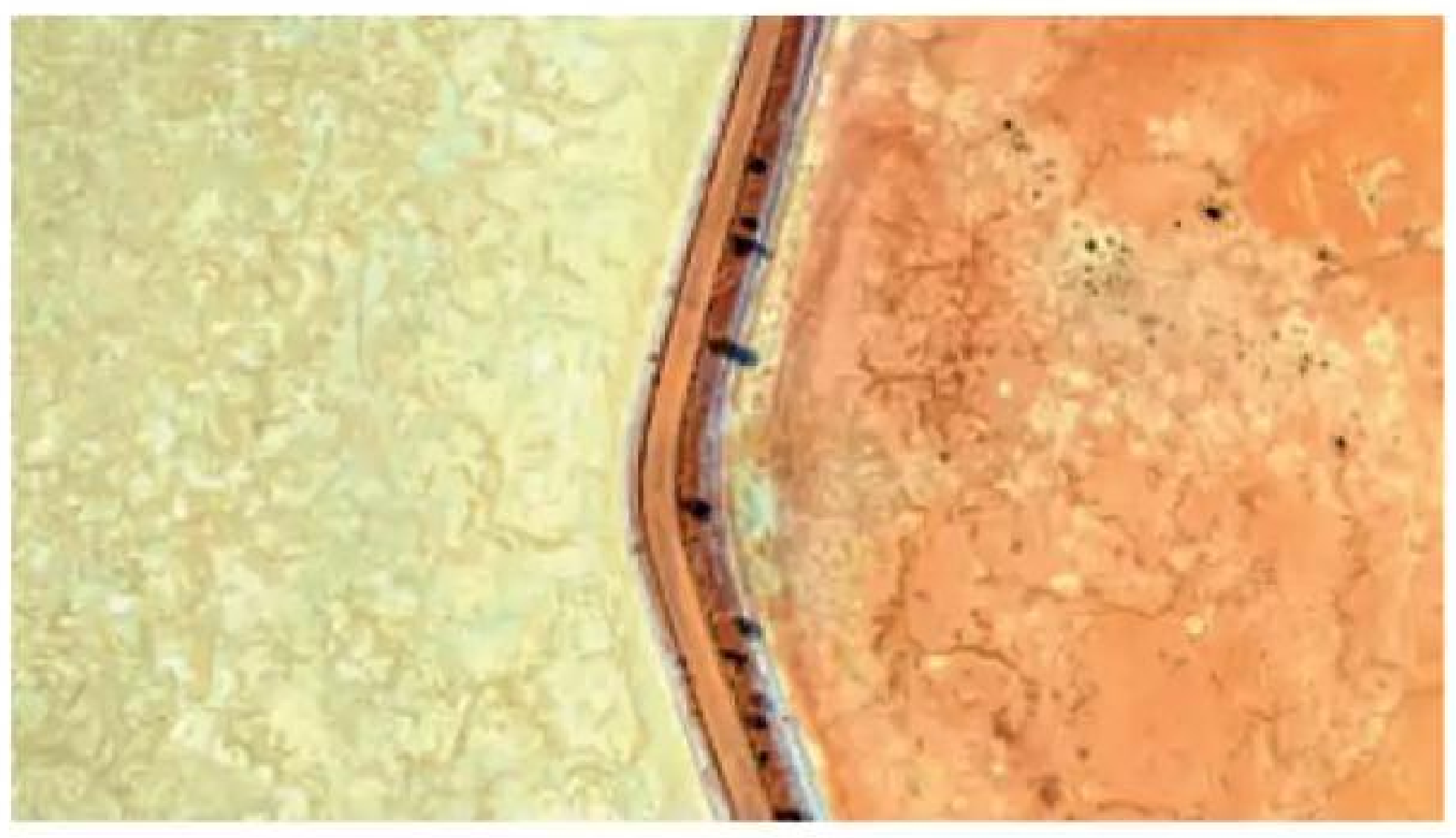


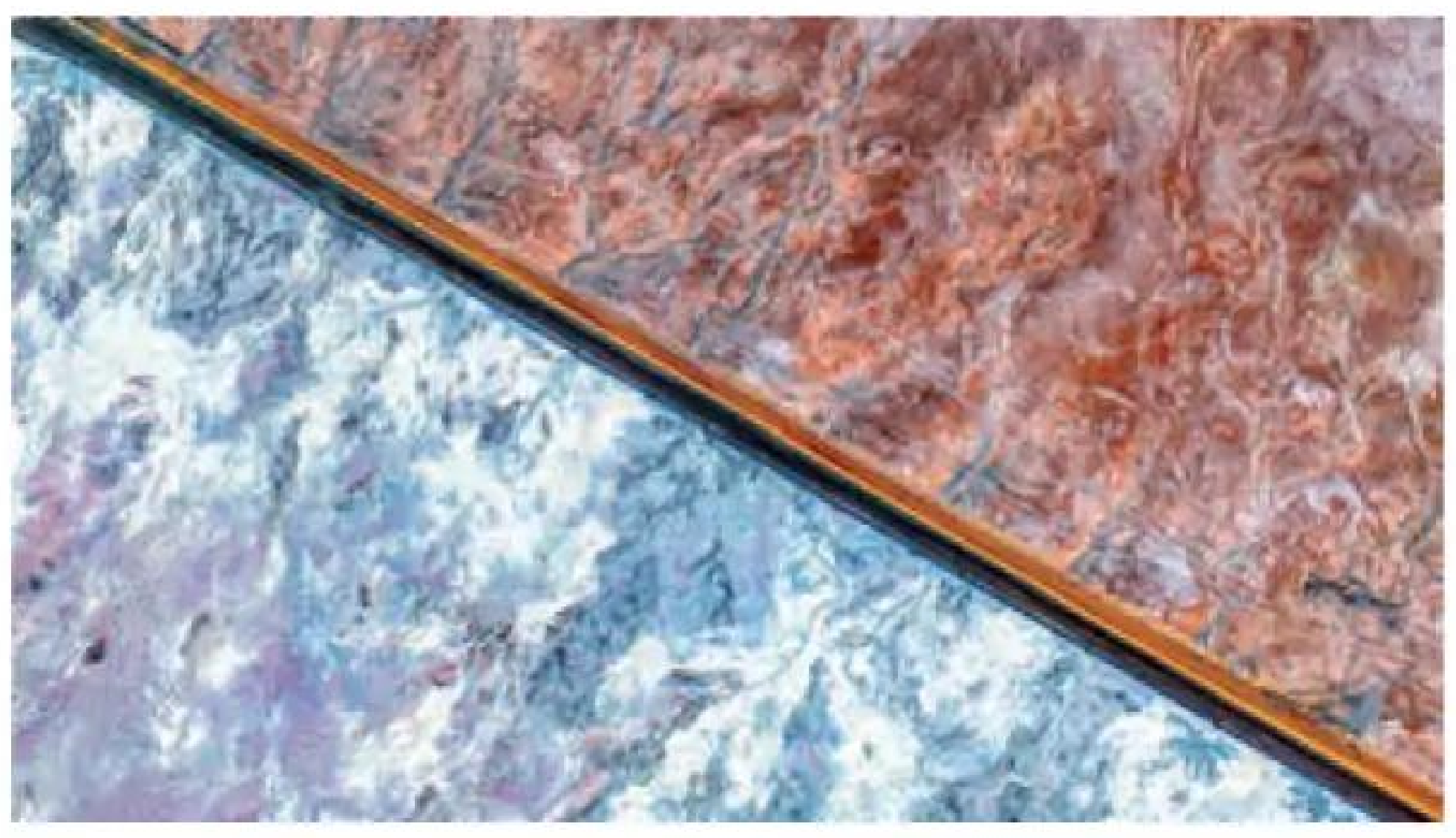
10. ALAN BOYD

SPLIT FILES



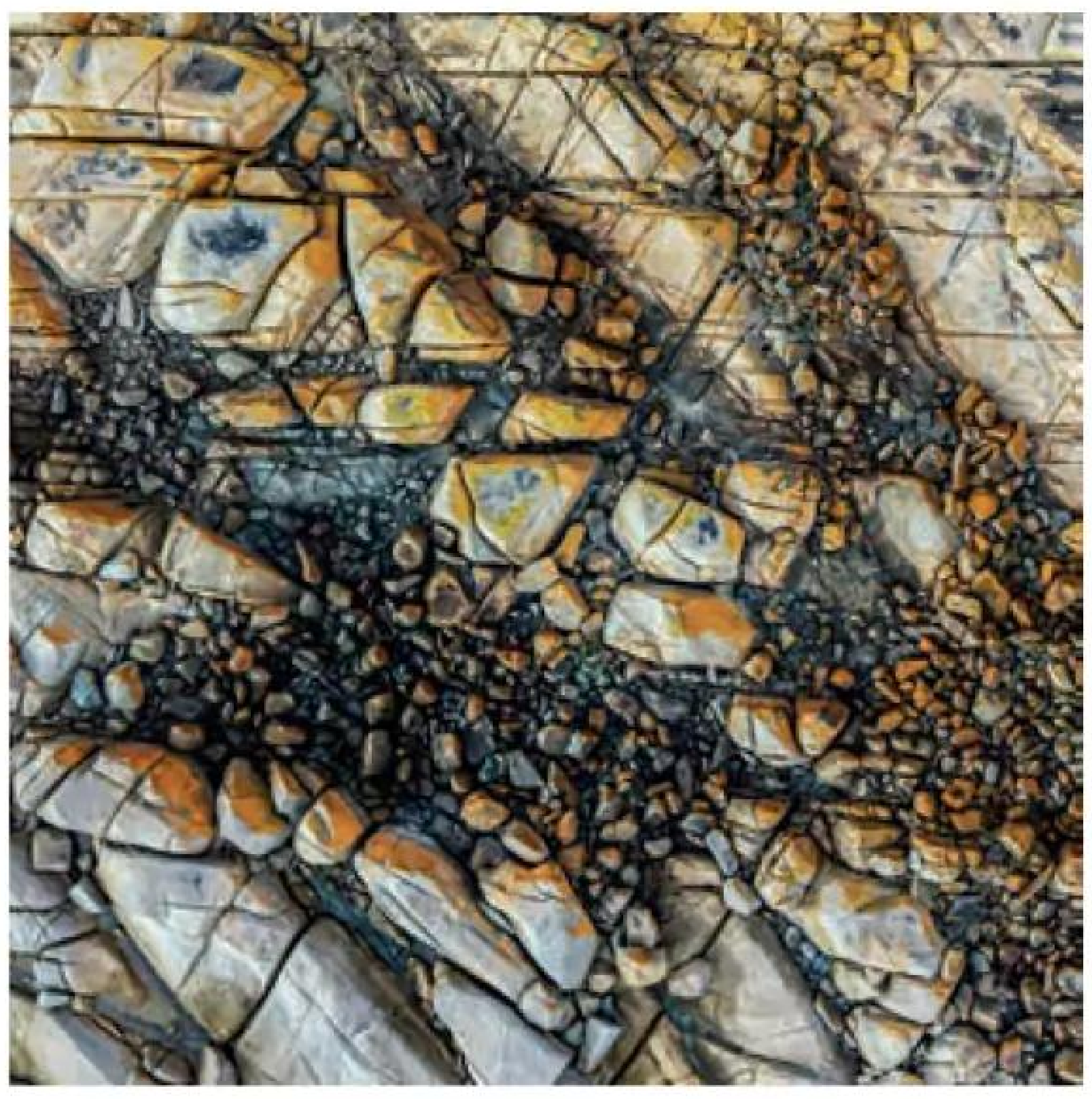


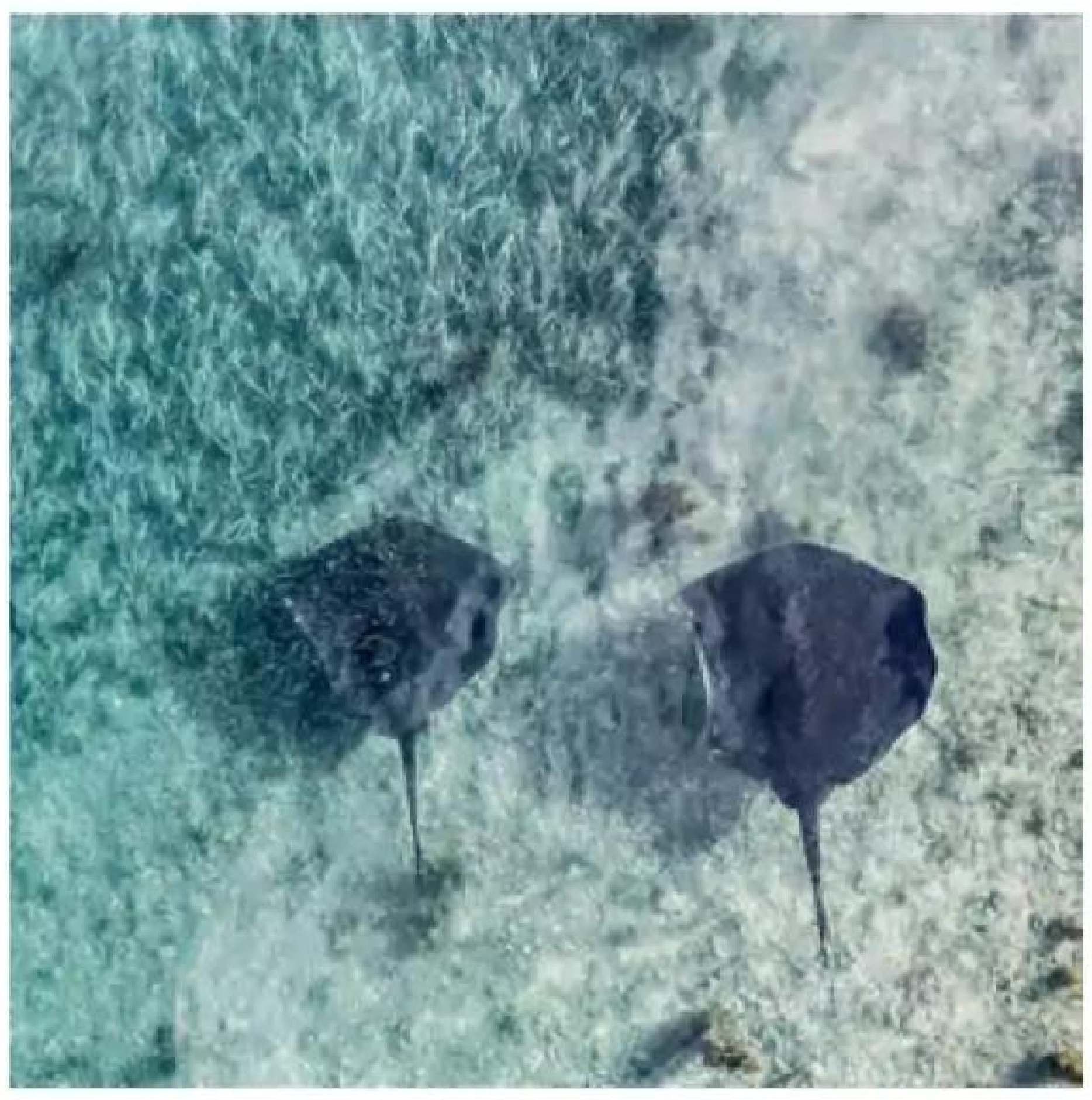


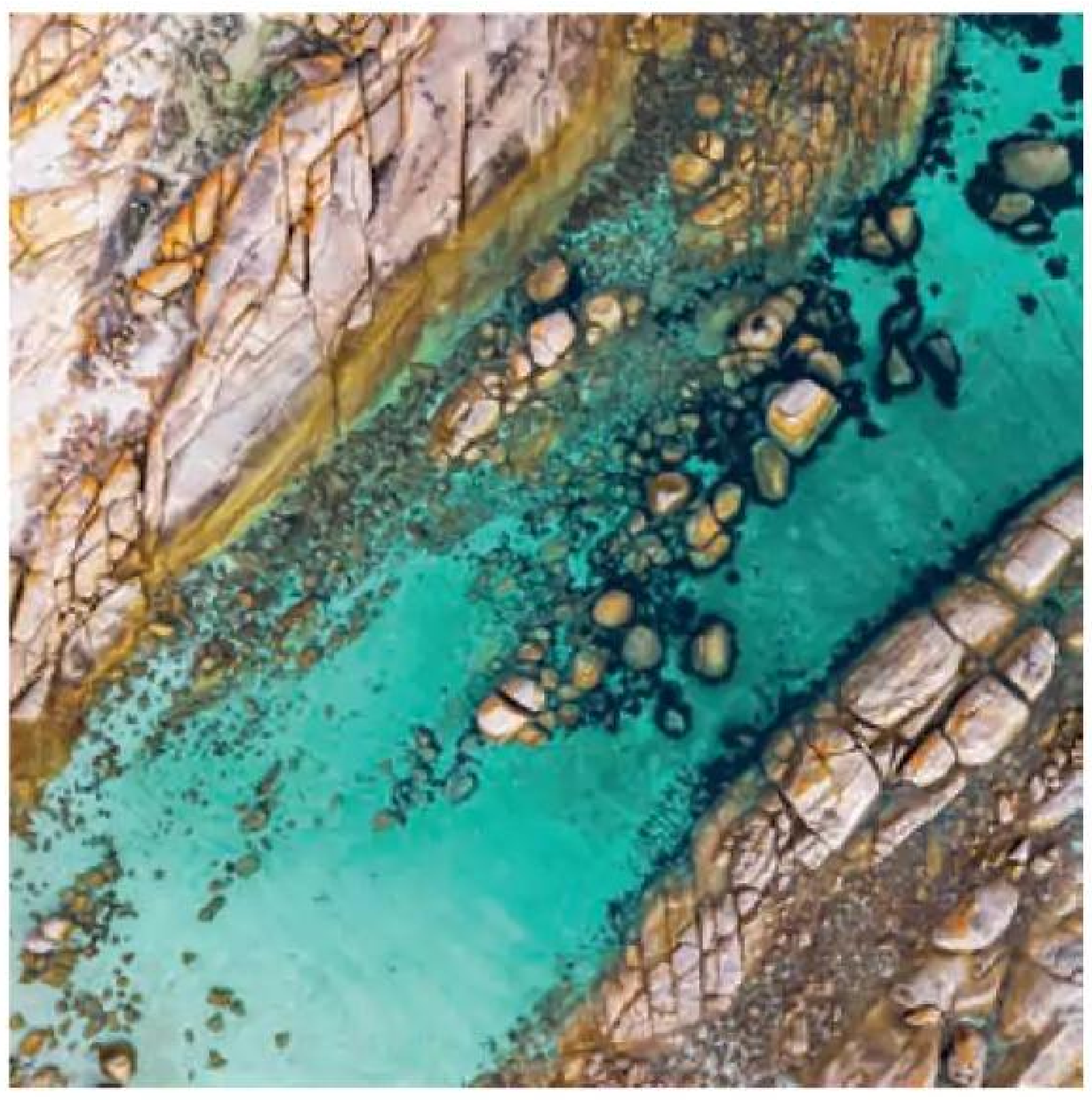


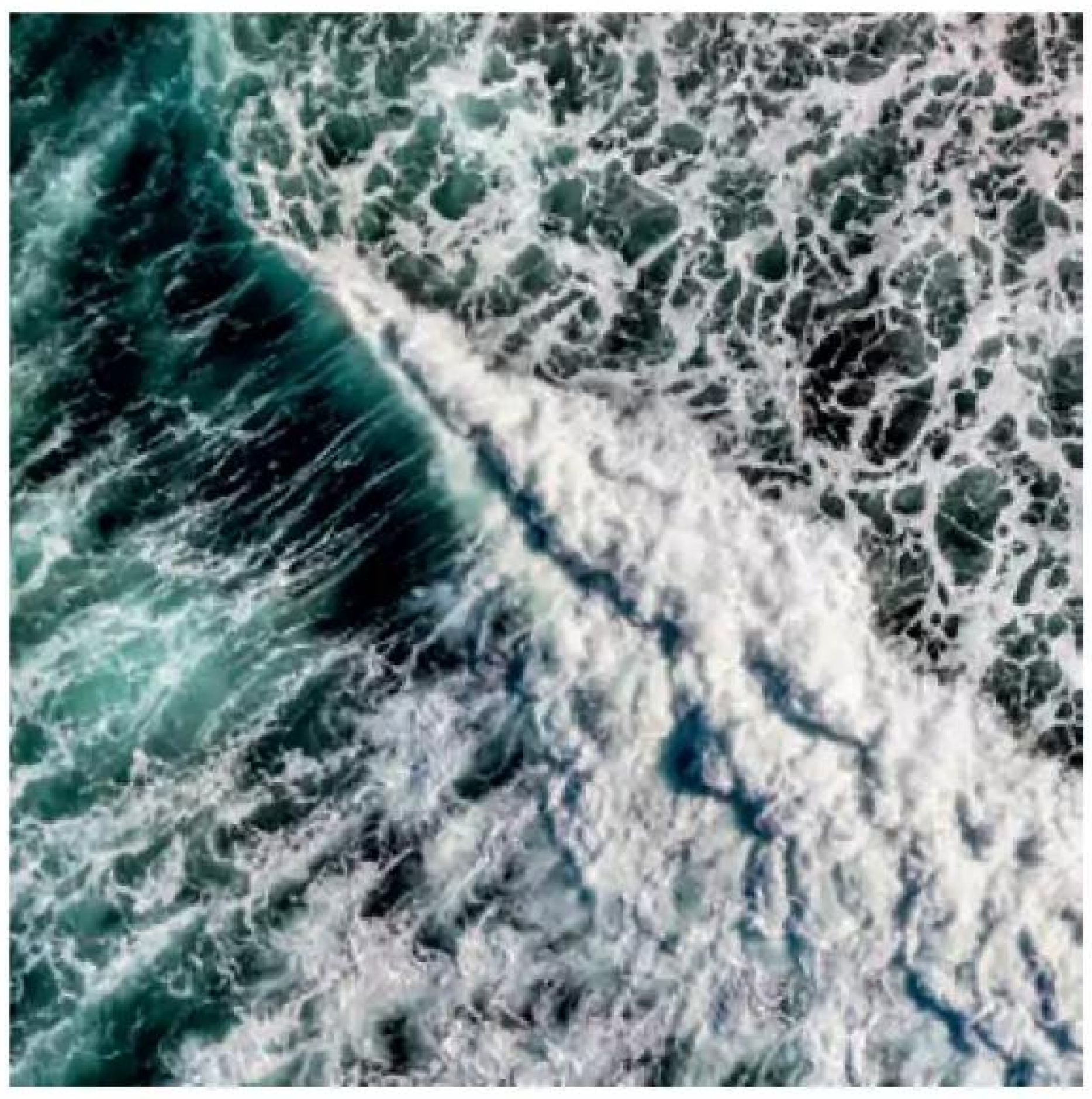
11. JONATHAN HOLLIDAY

COASTAL SCENES



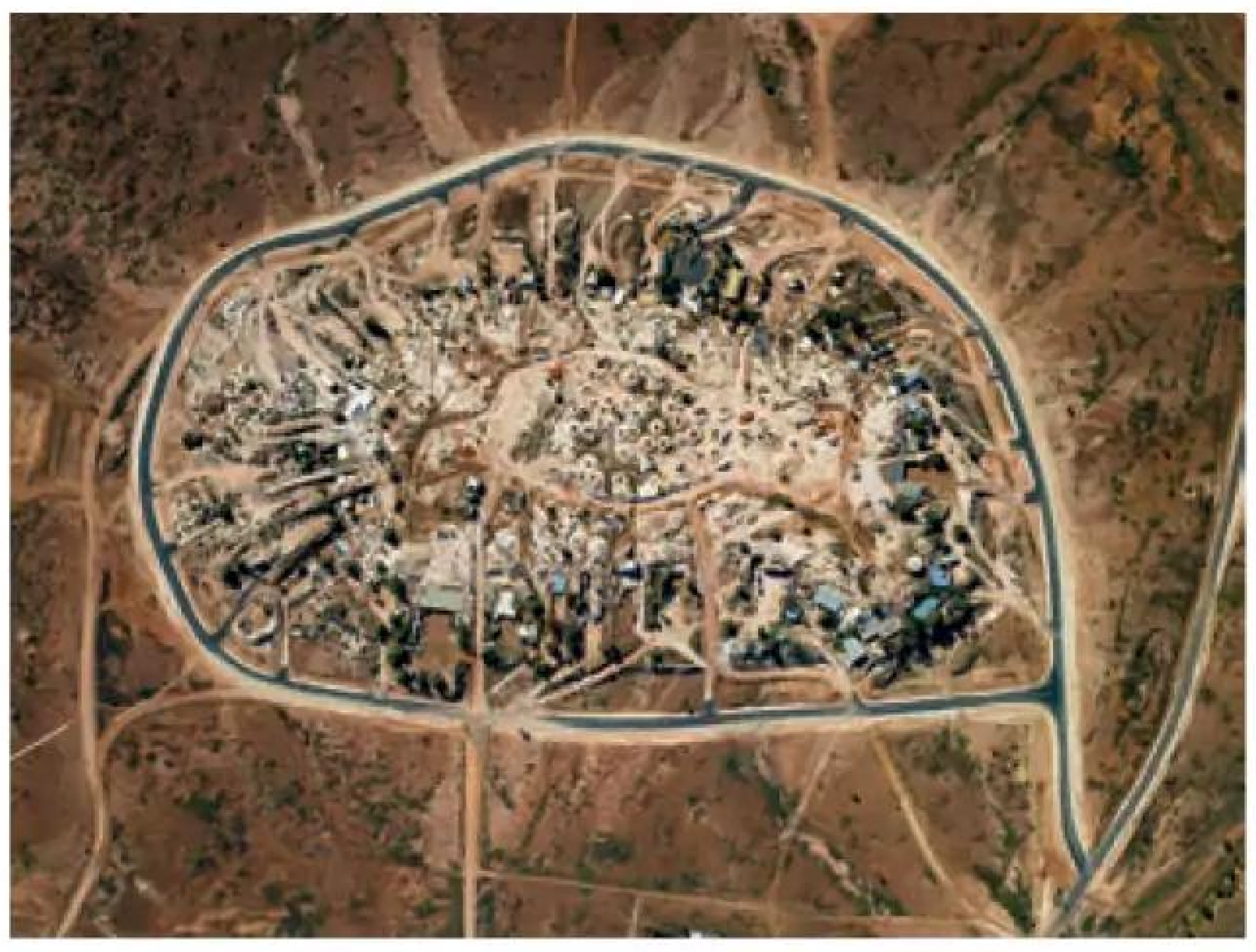






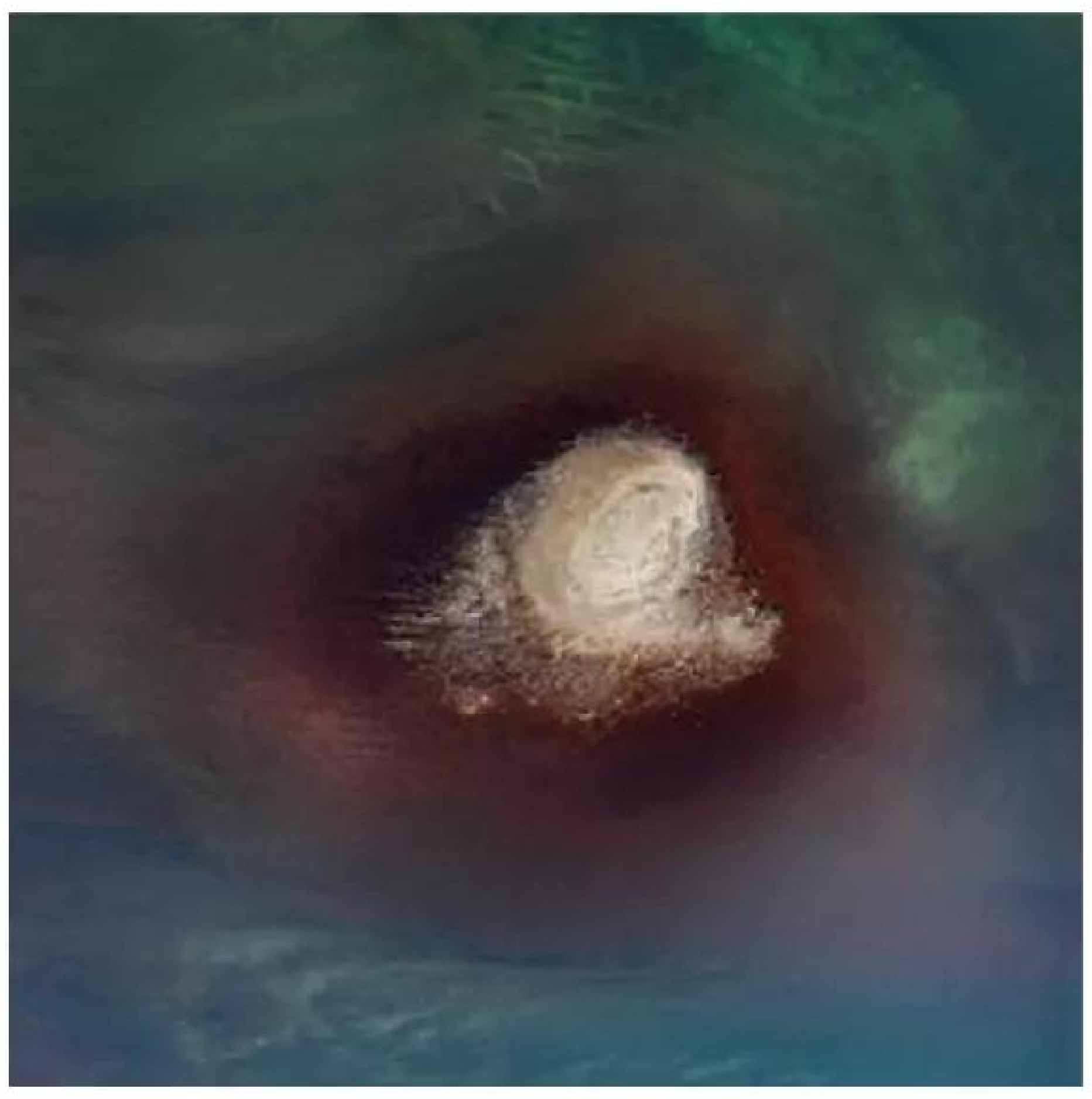
12. PETER HARLOW

OPALESCENT



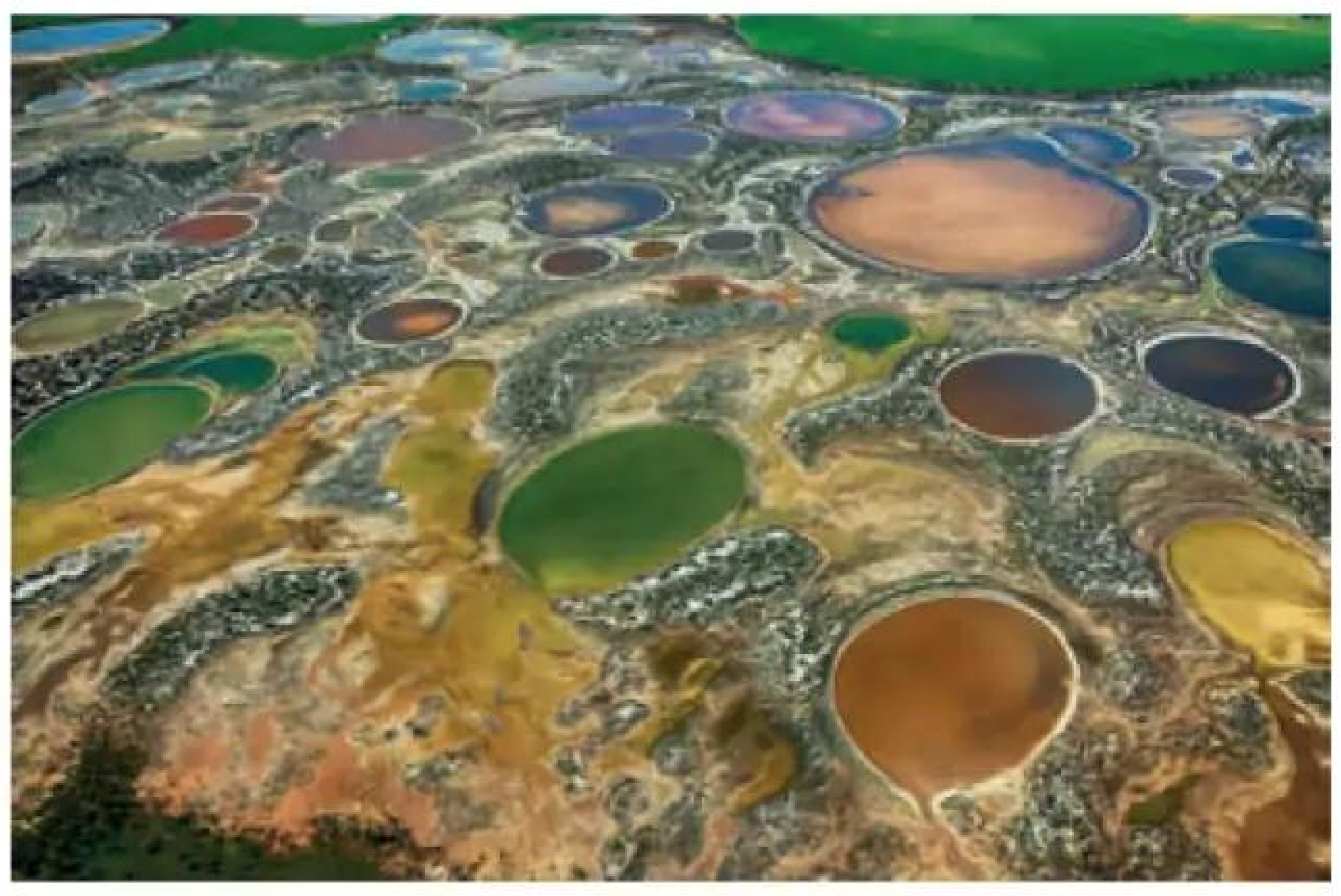
13. MARGRIT WENDT

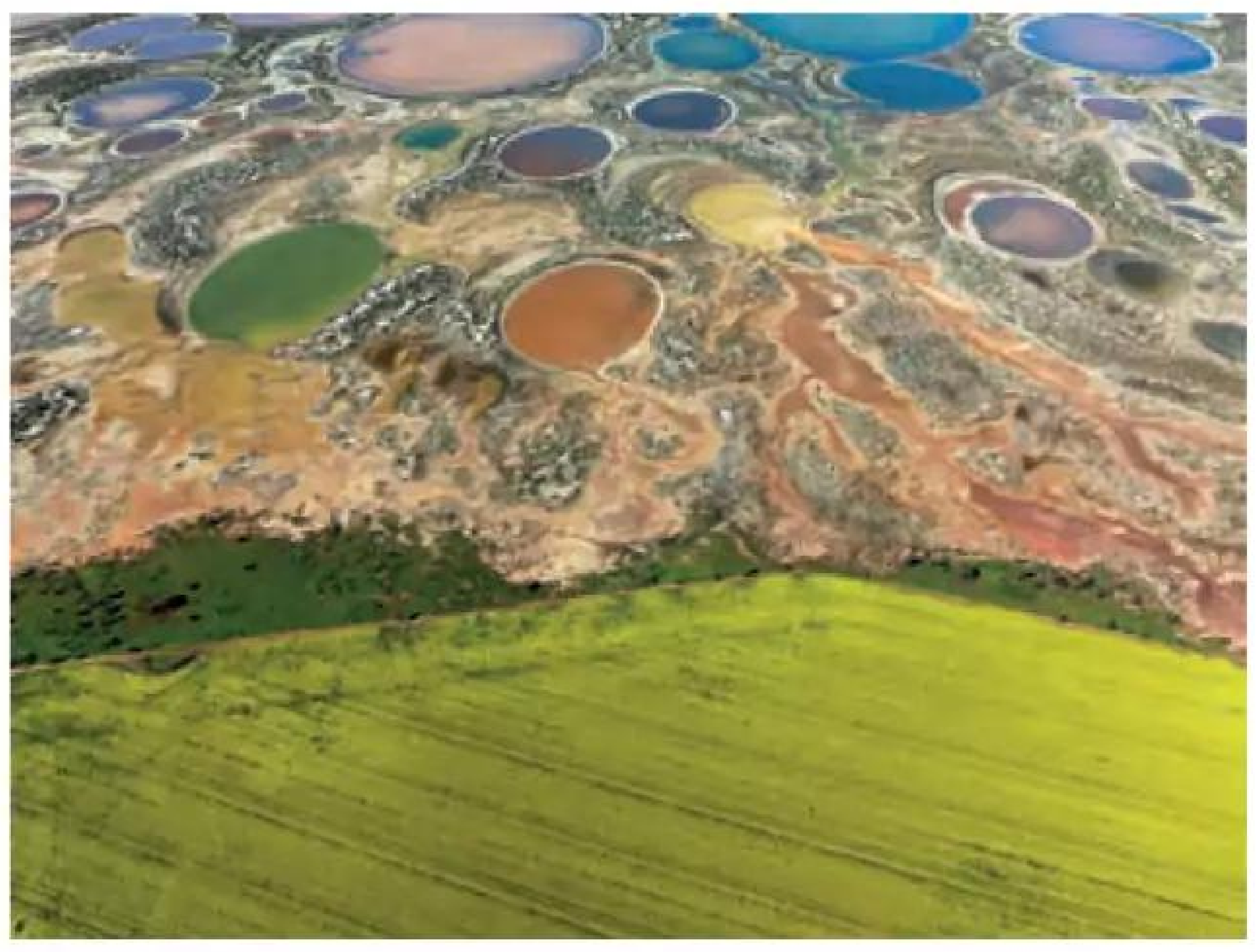
DROUGHT STRICKEN LAKES, CLIFTON AND PRESTON



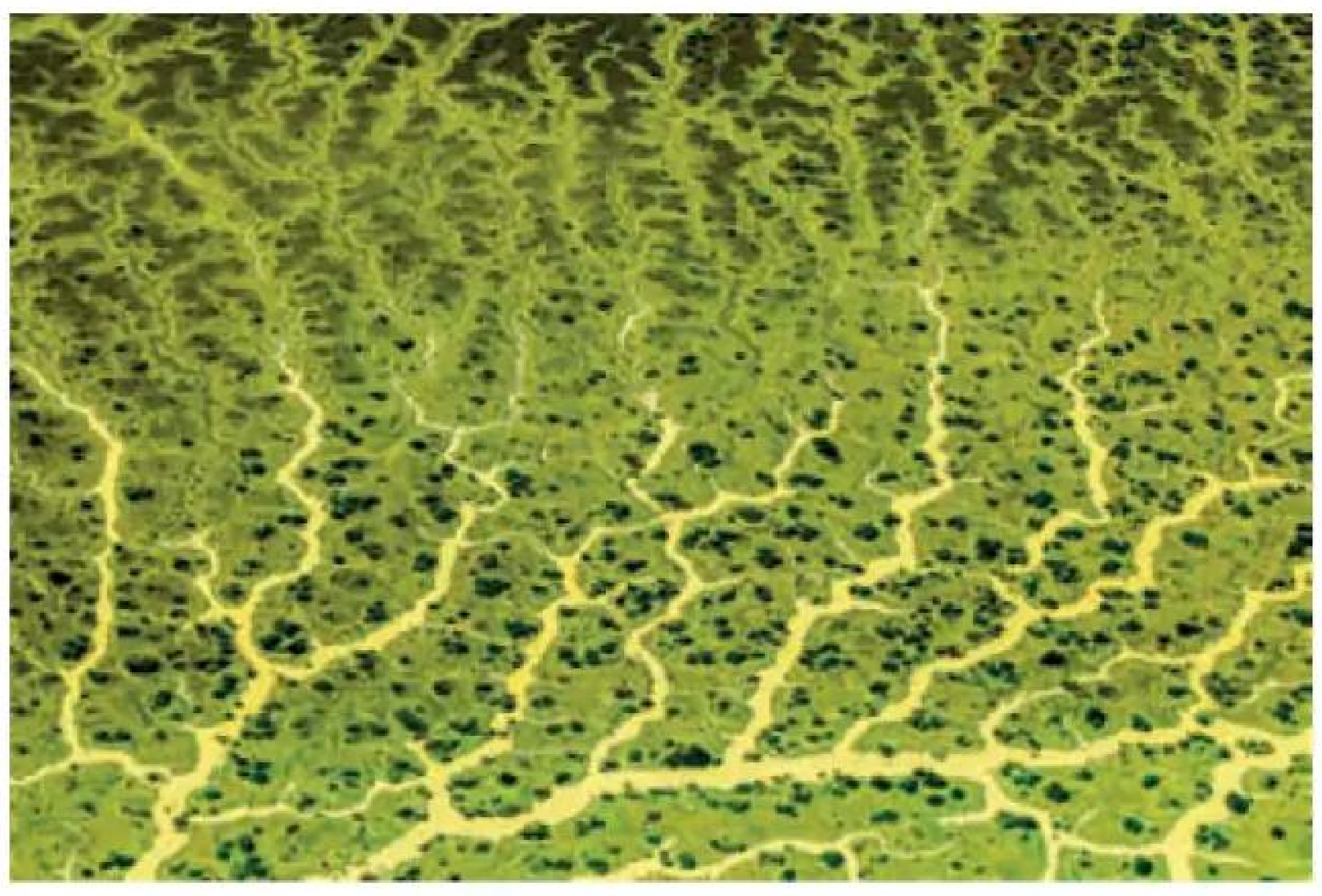
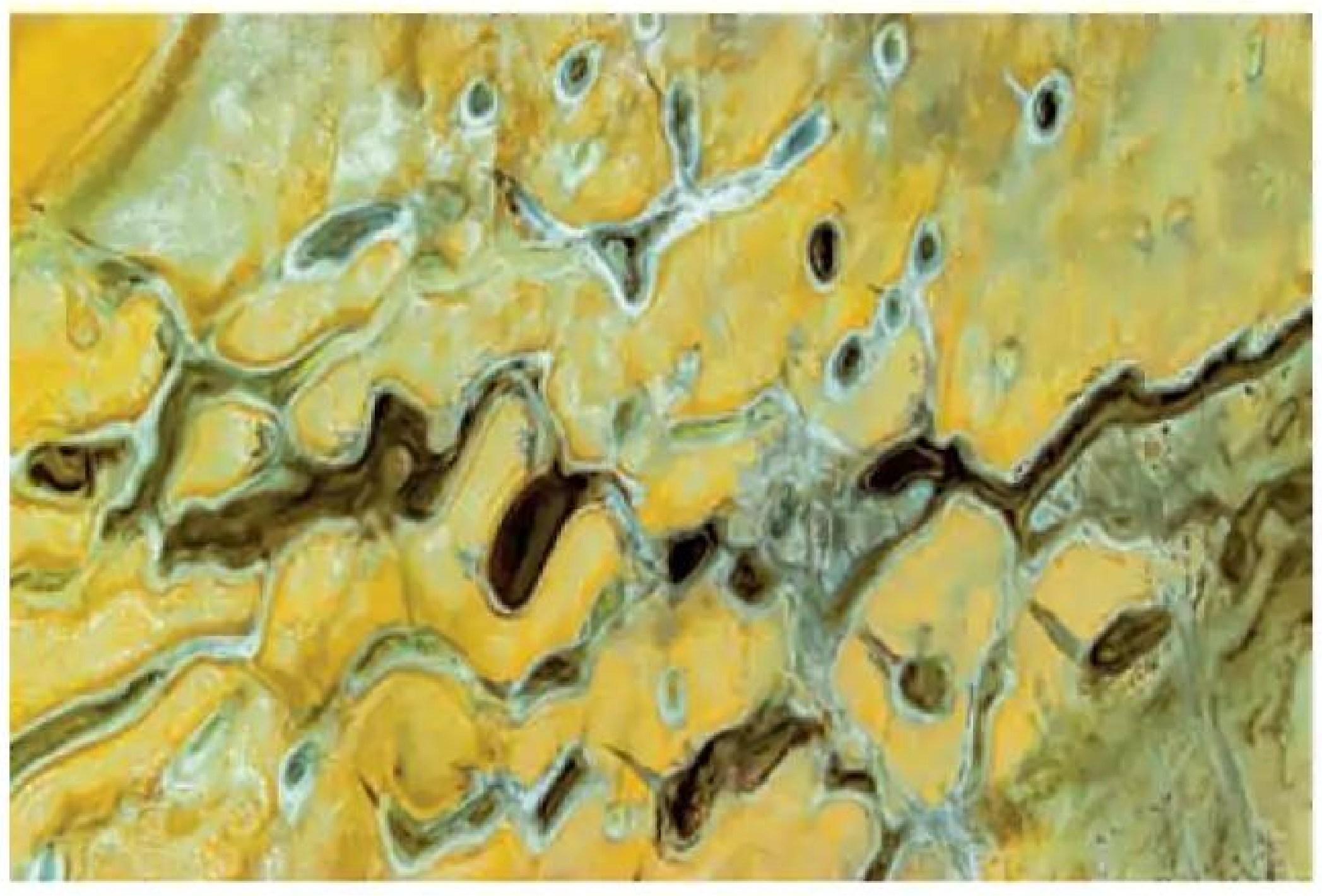
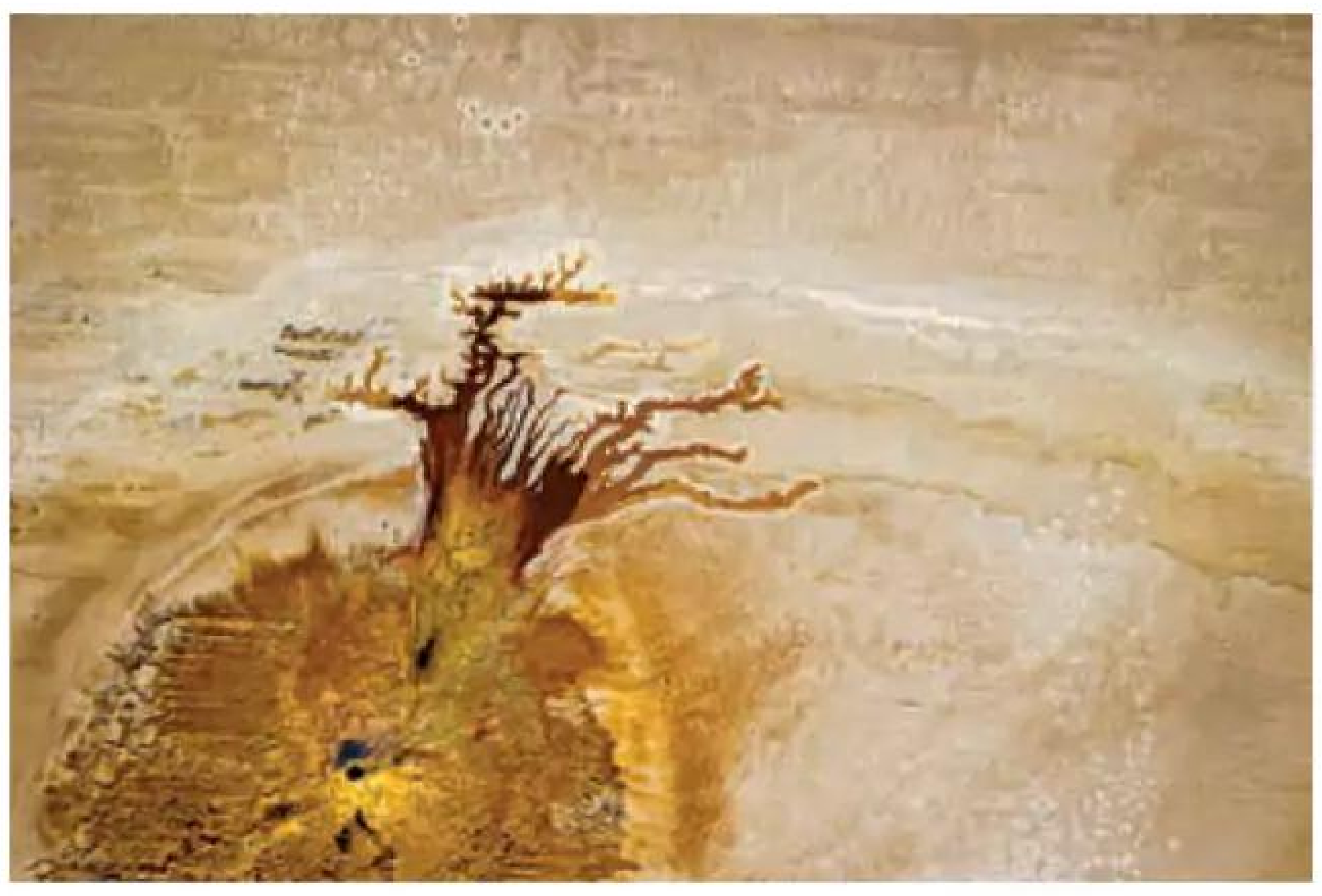
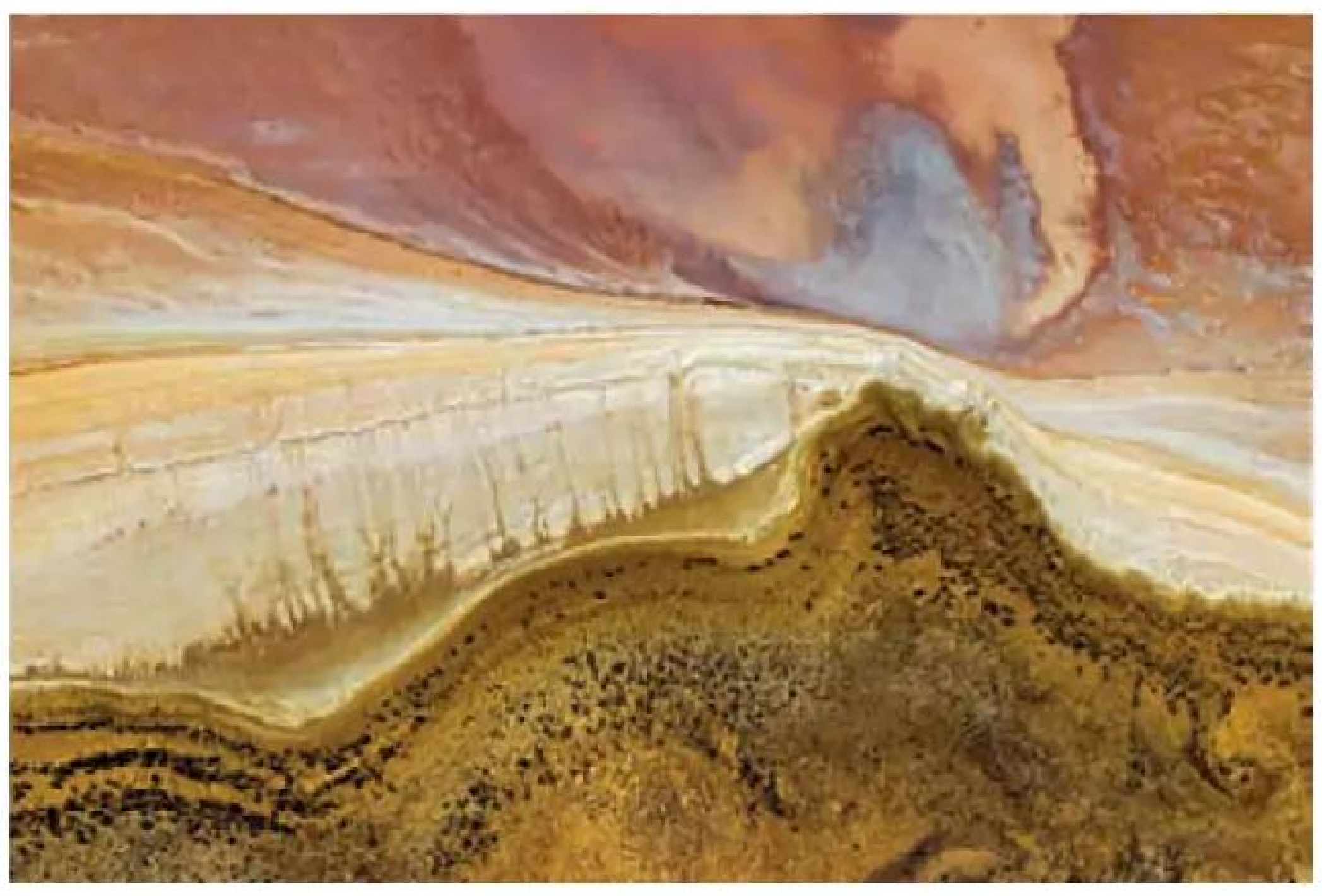
14. CAMERON SUTHERLAND

NATURE'S COLOUR PALETTE

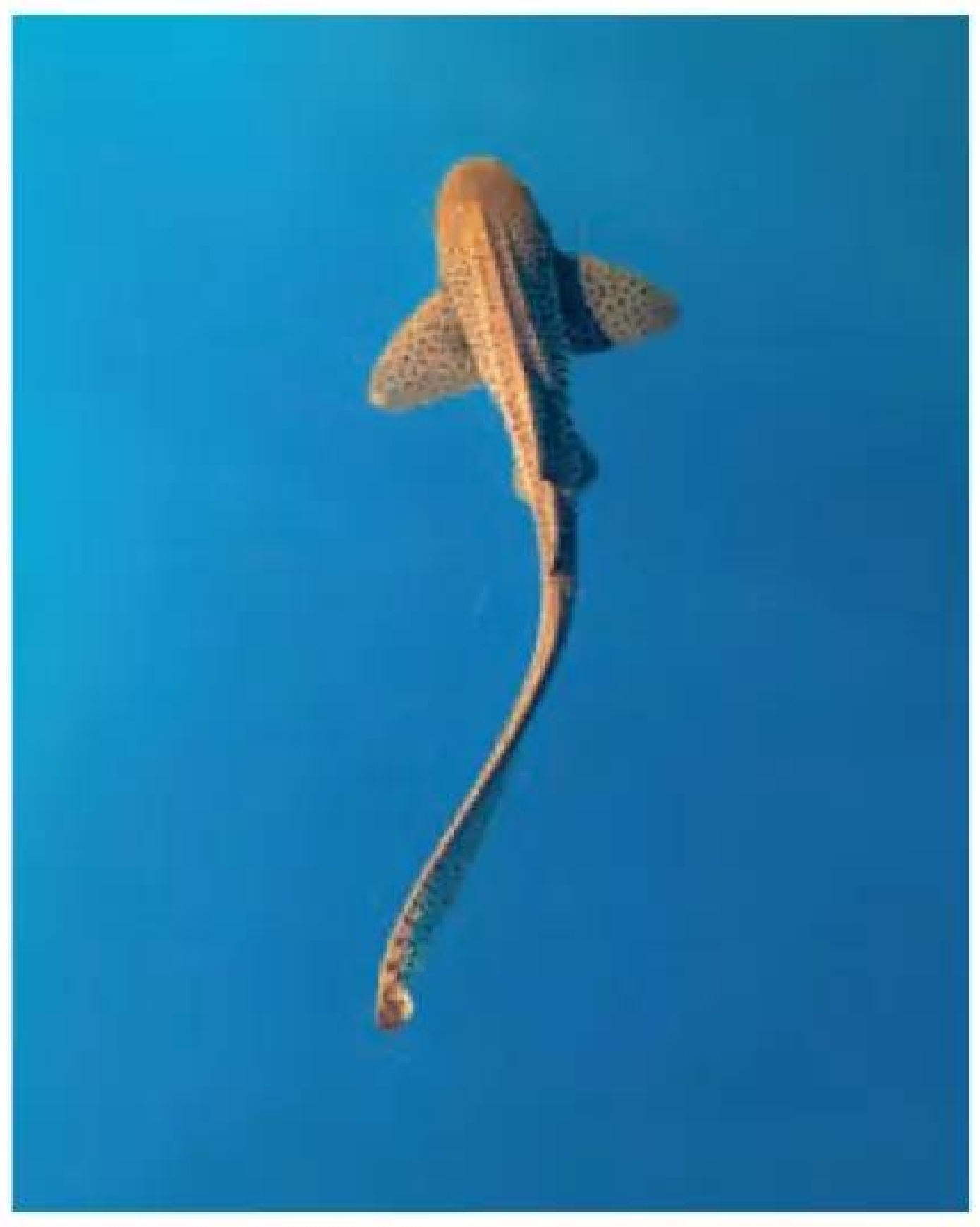
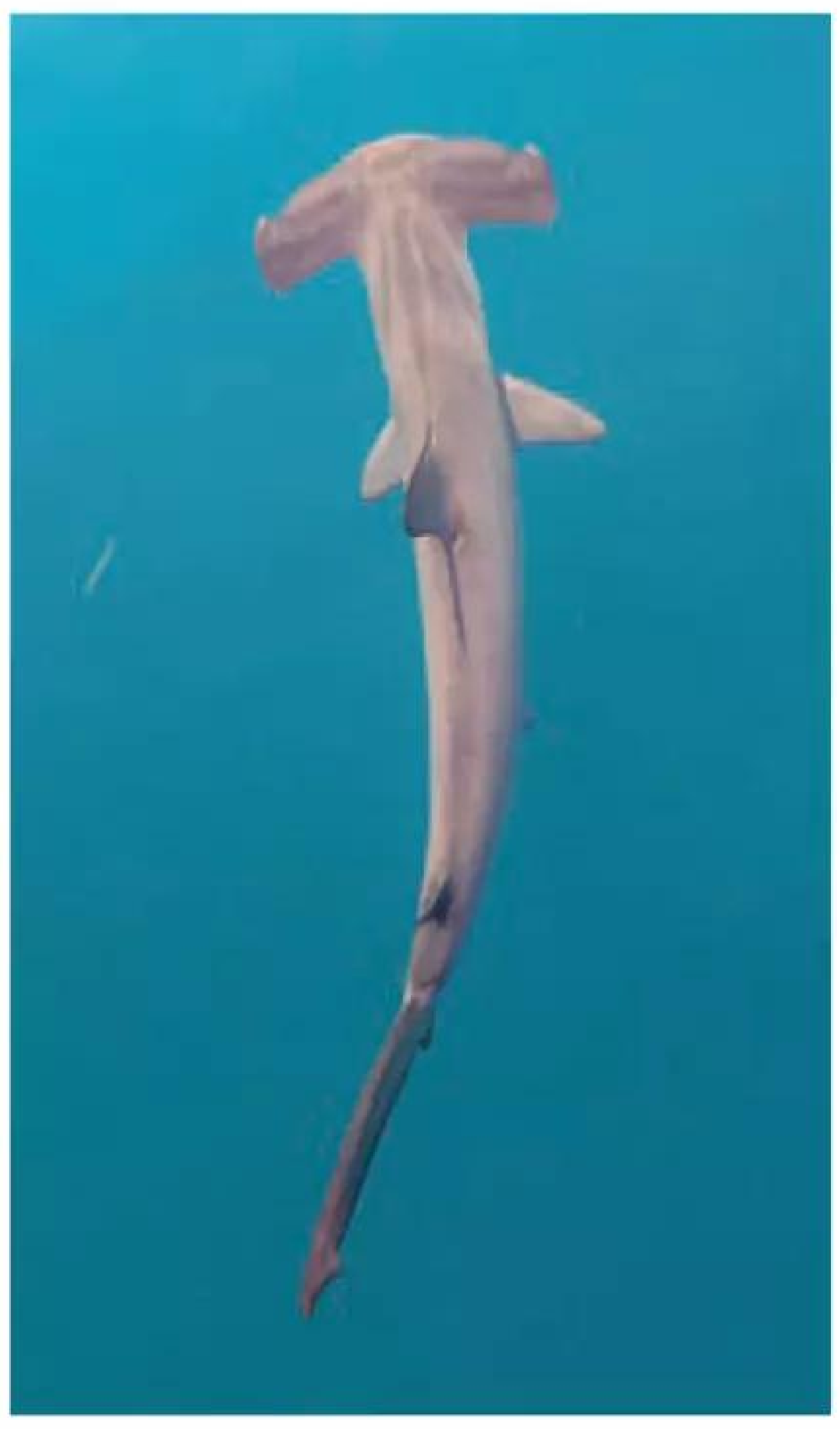
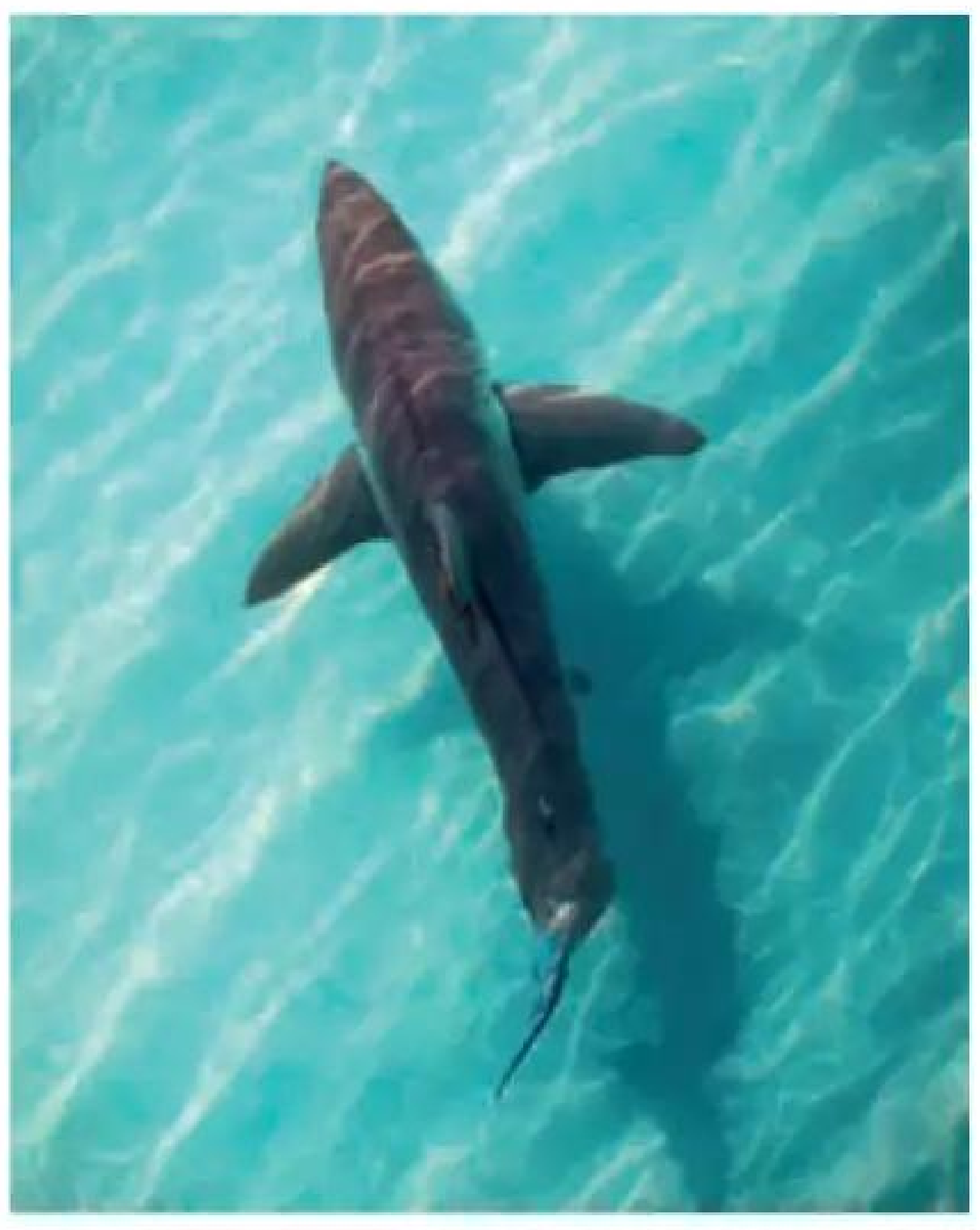
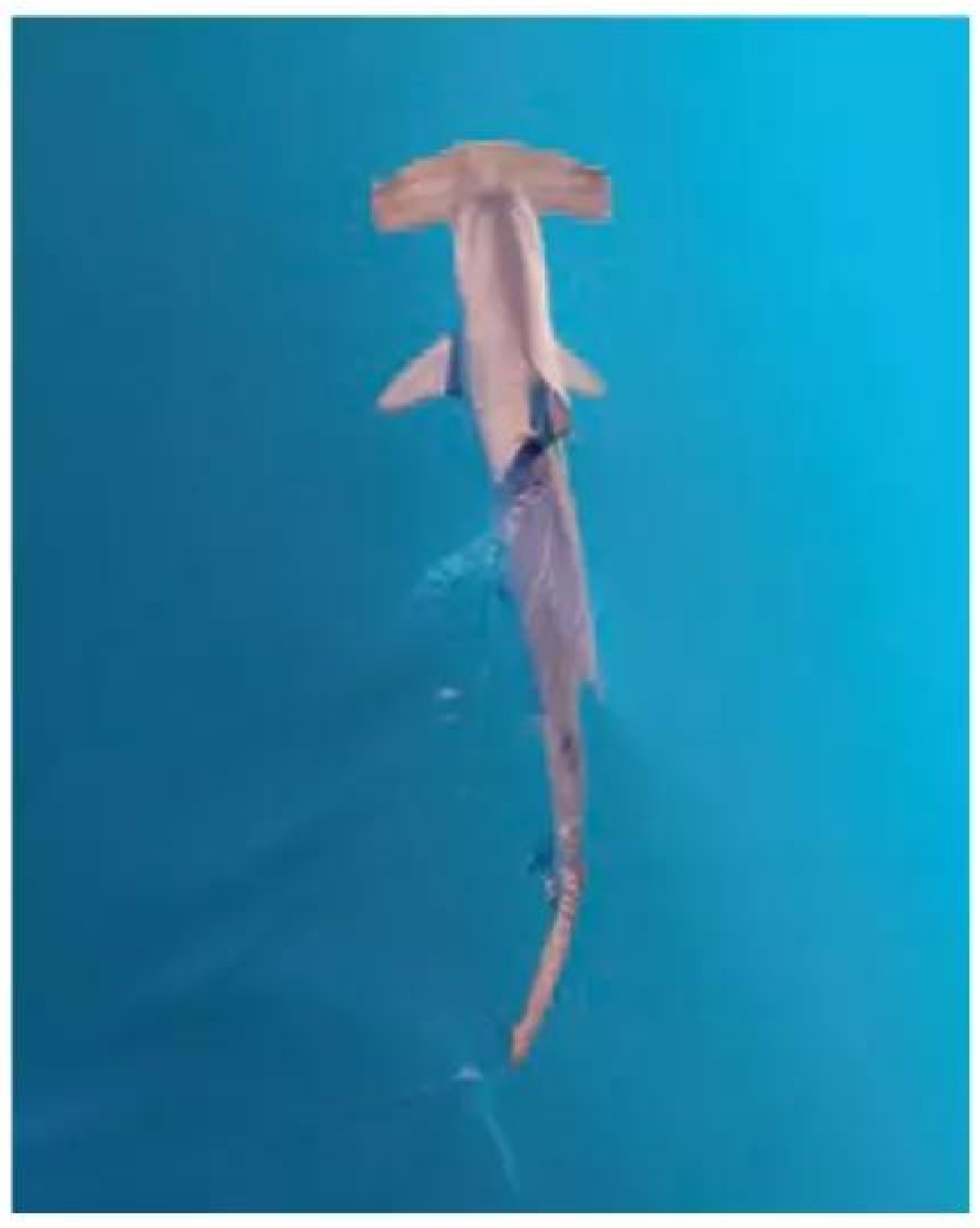




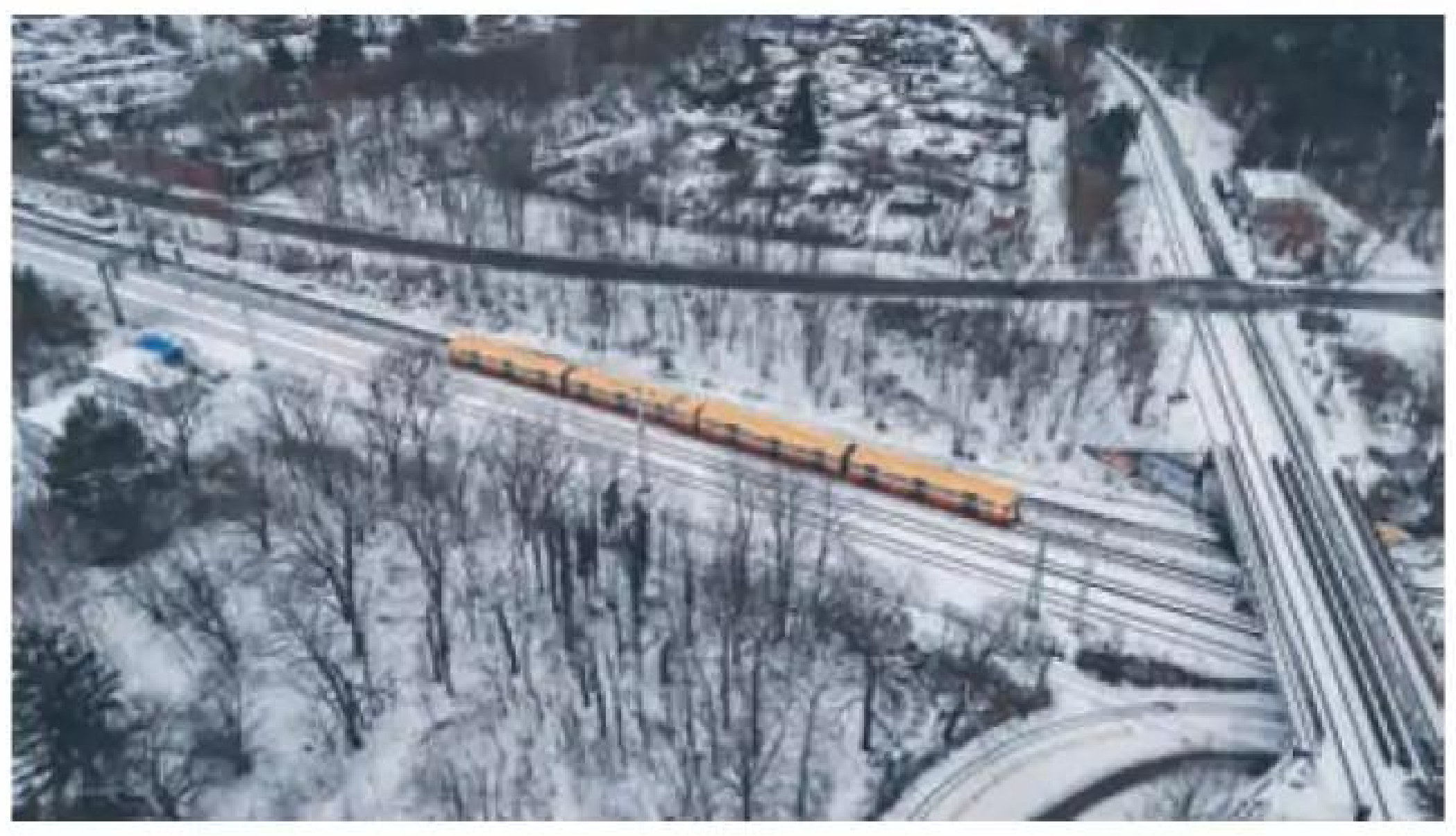
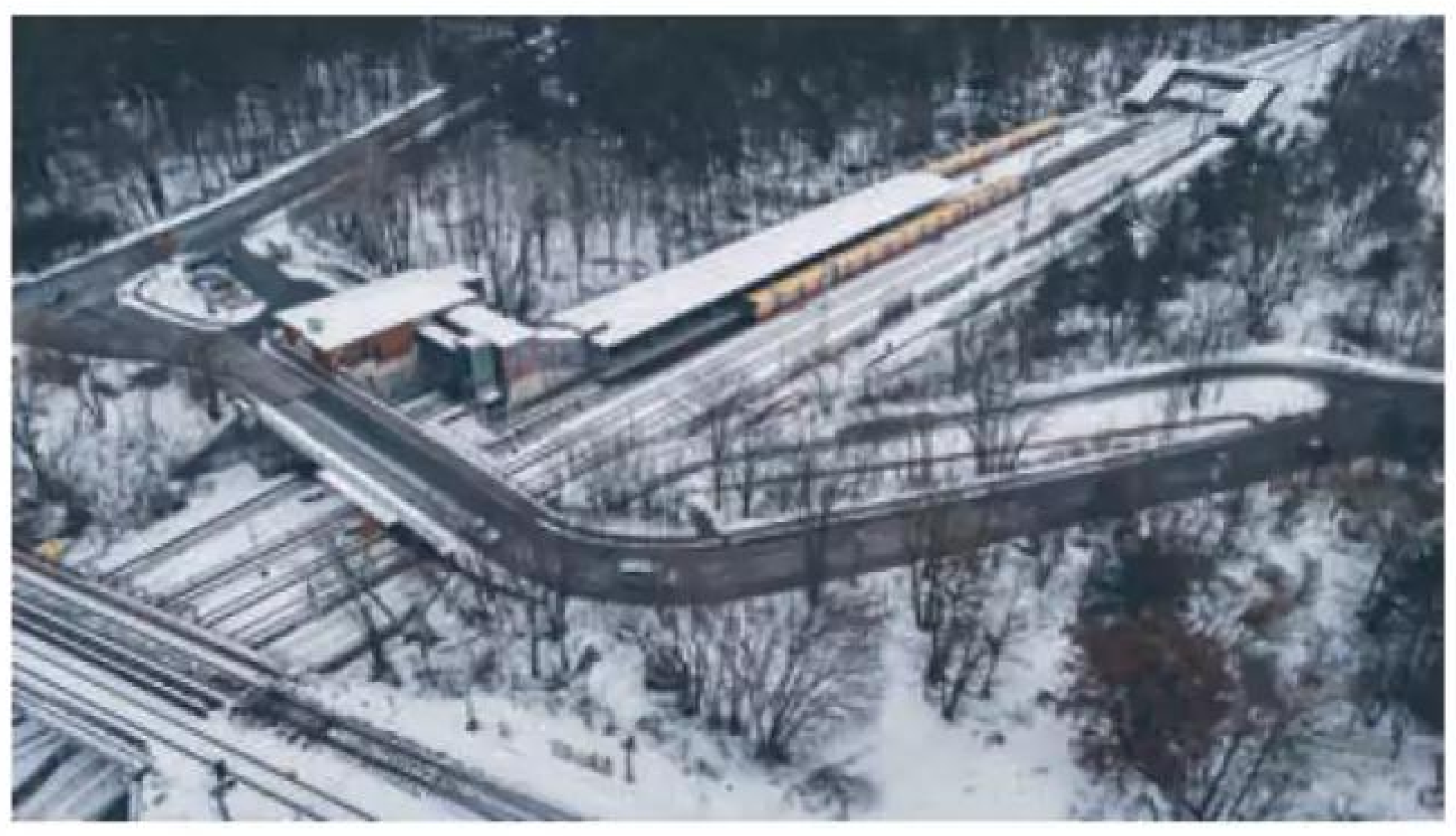
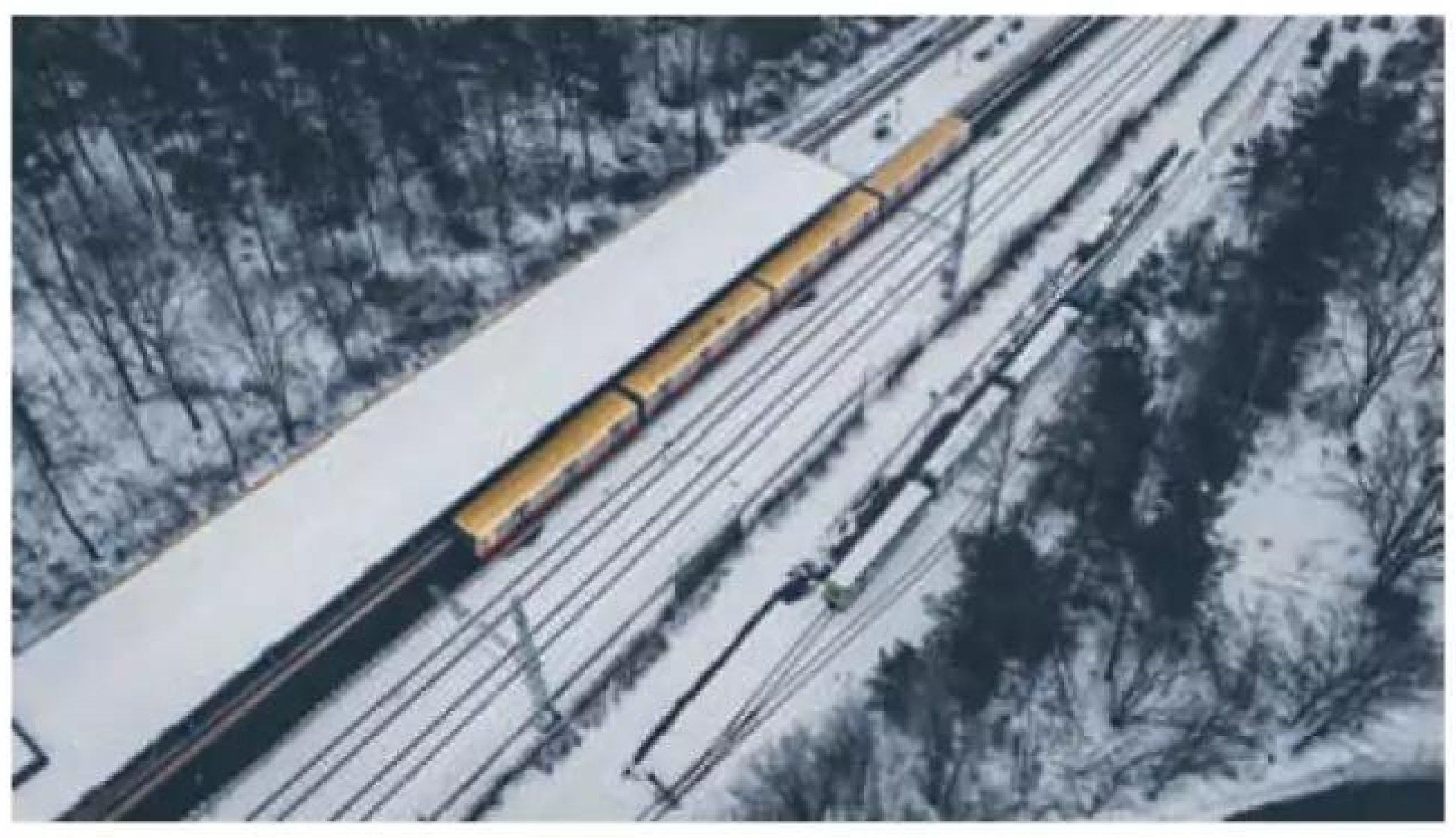
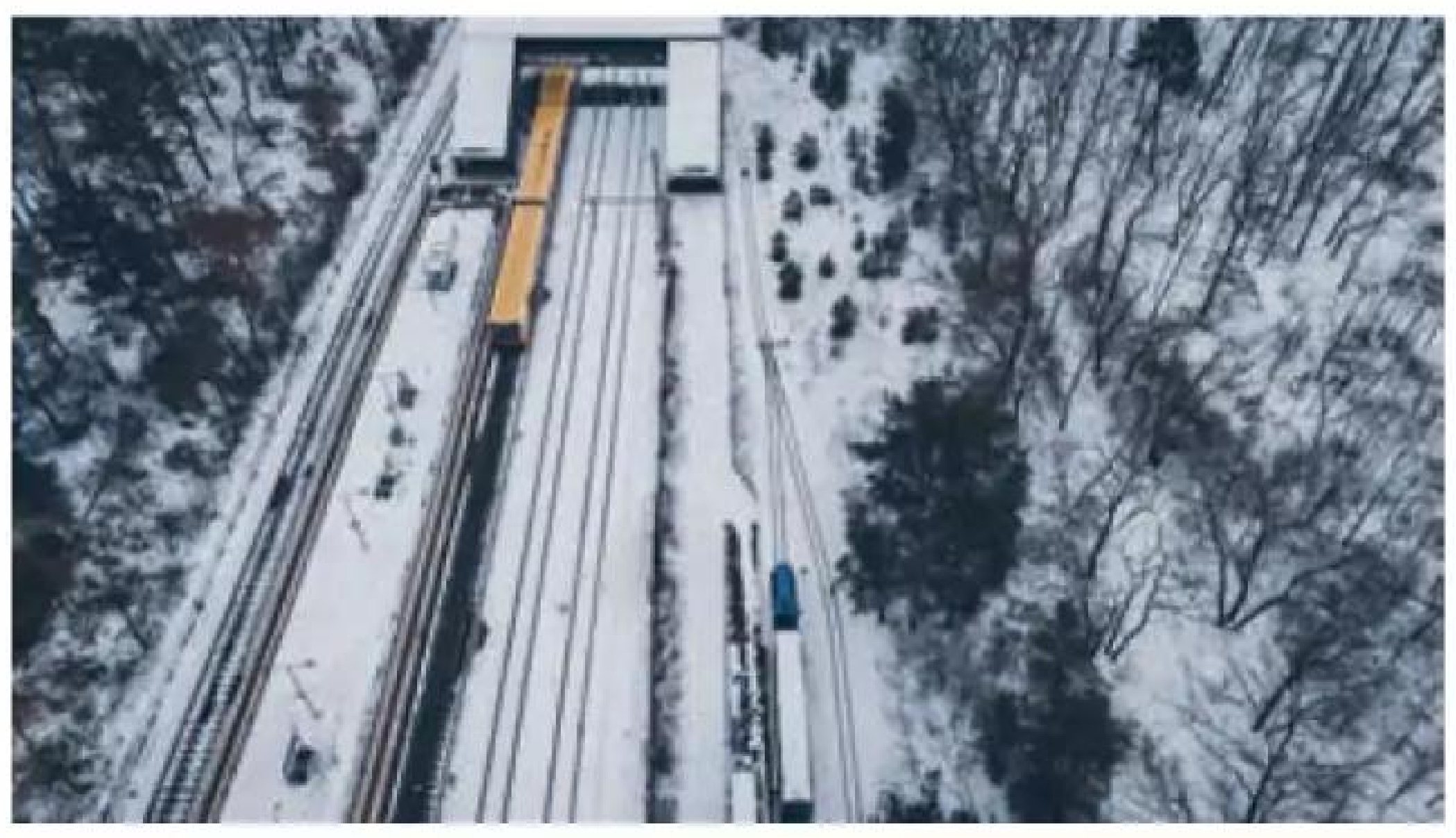
15. JOANNE COSTANZO
TRANSIENT NATURE

16. ASHLEY SYKES
SHARKS FROM ABOVE

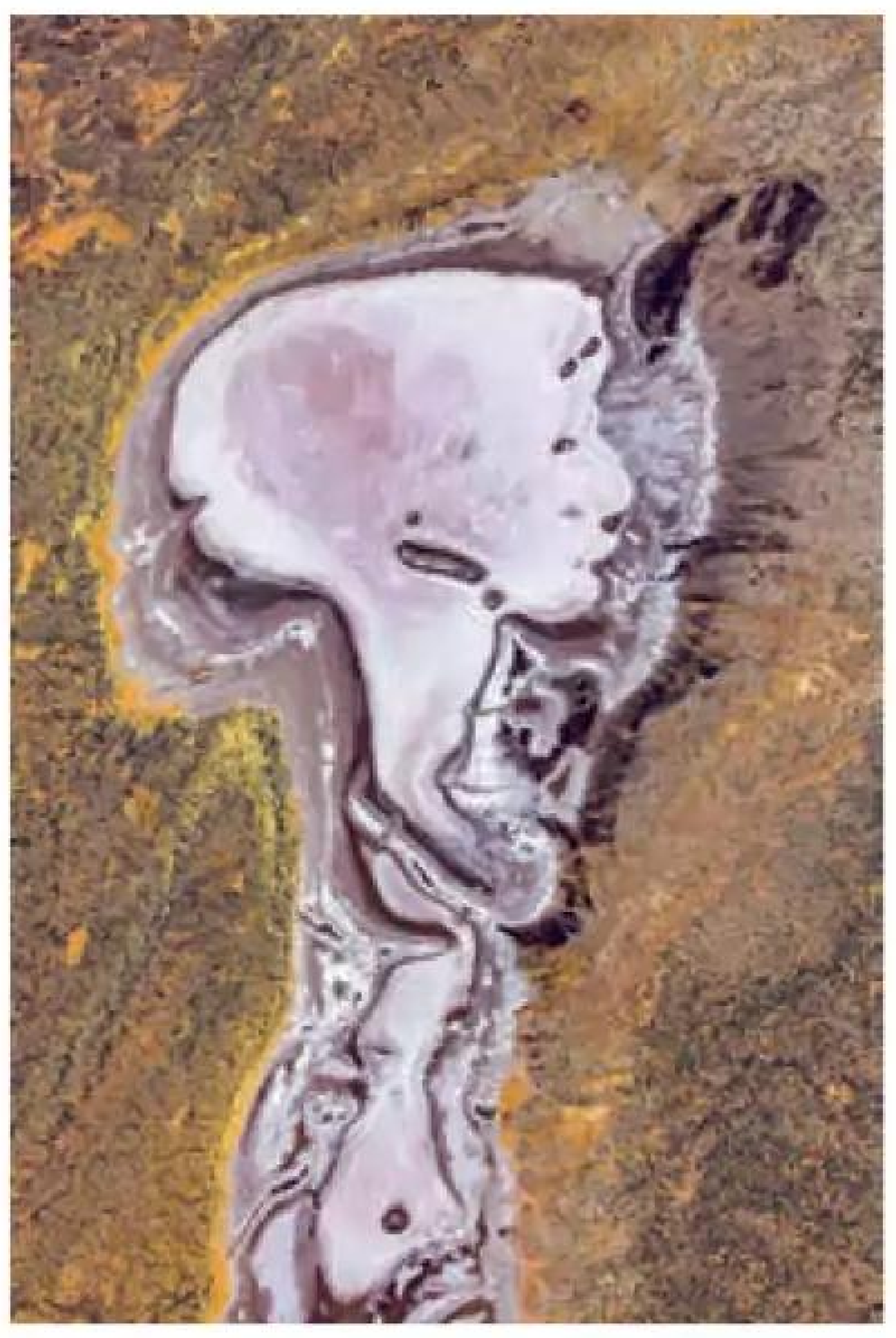





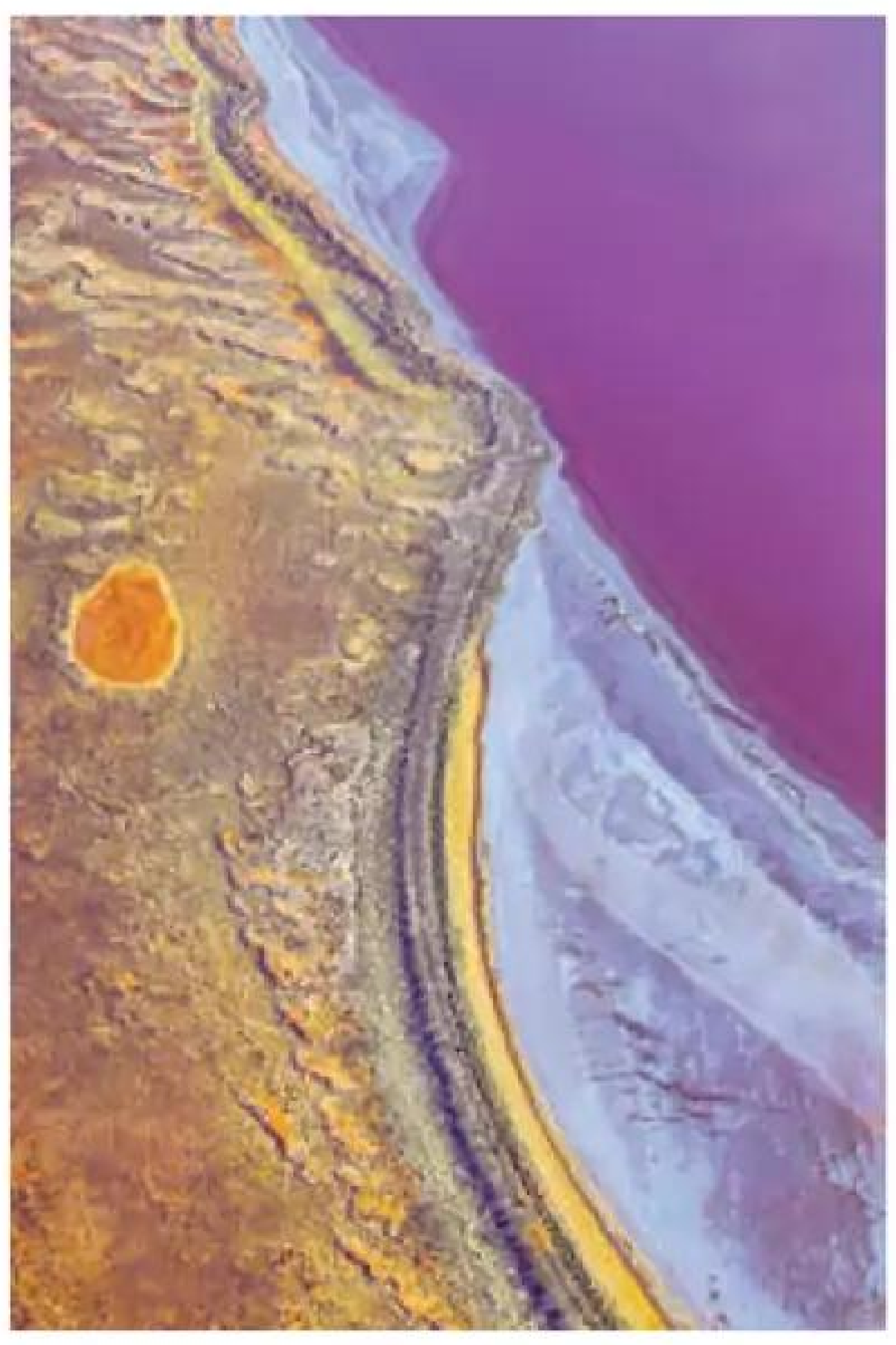
17. ADRIAN SMARRELLI
SNOW BAHN

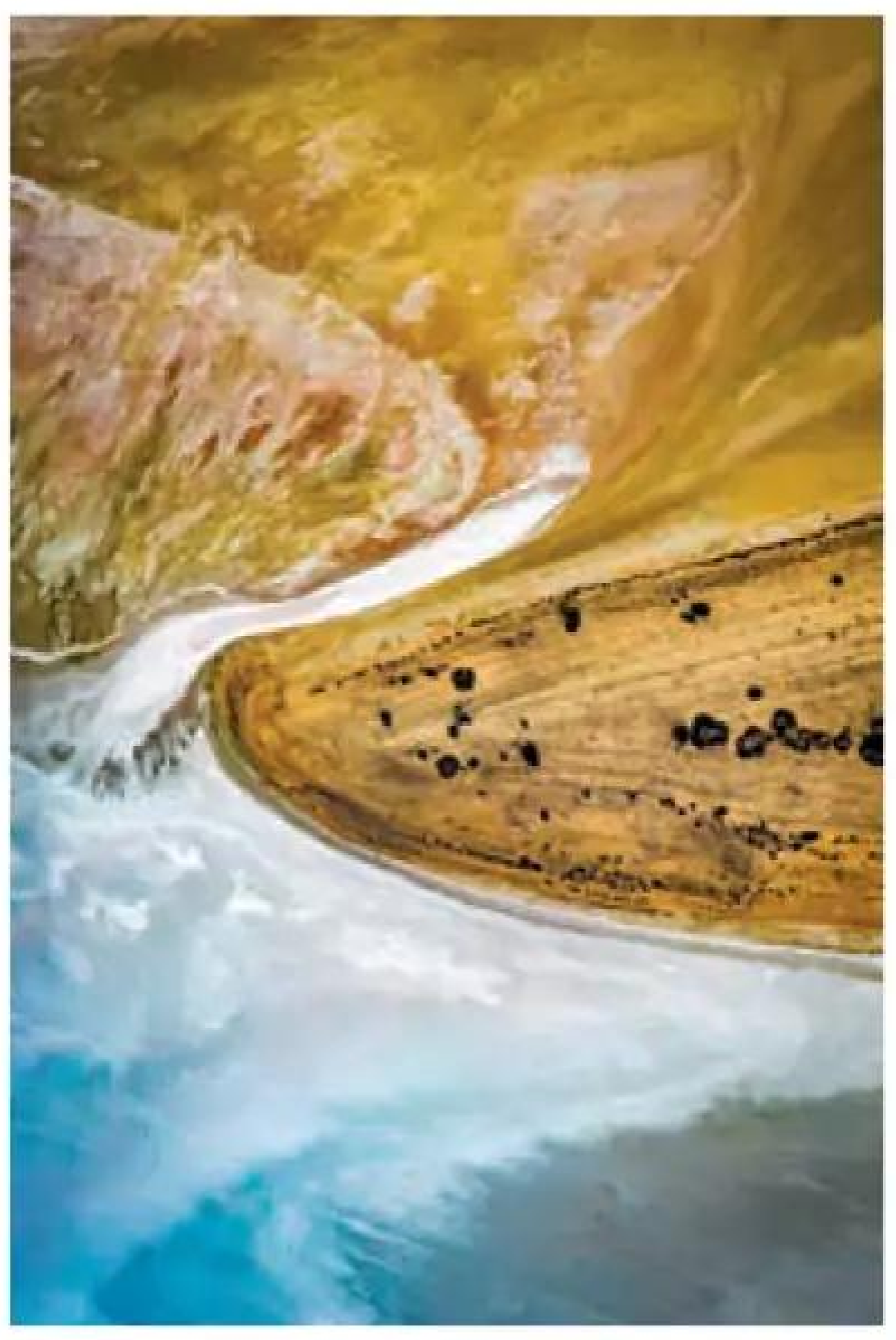





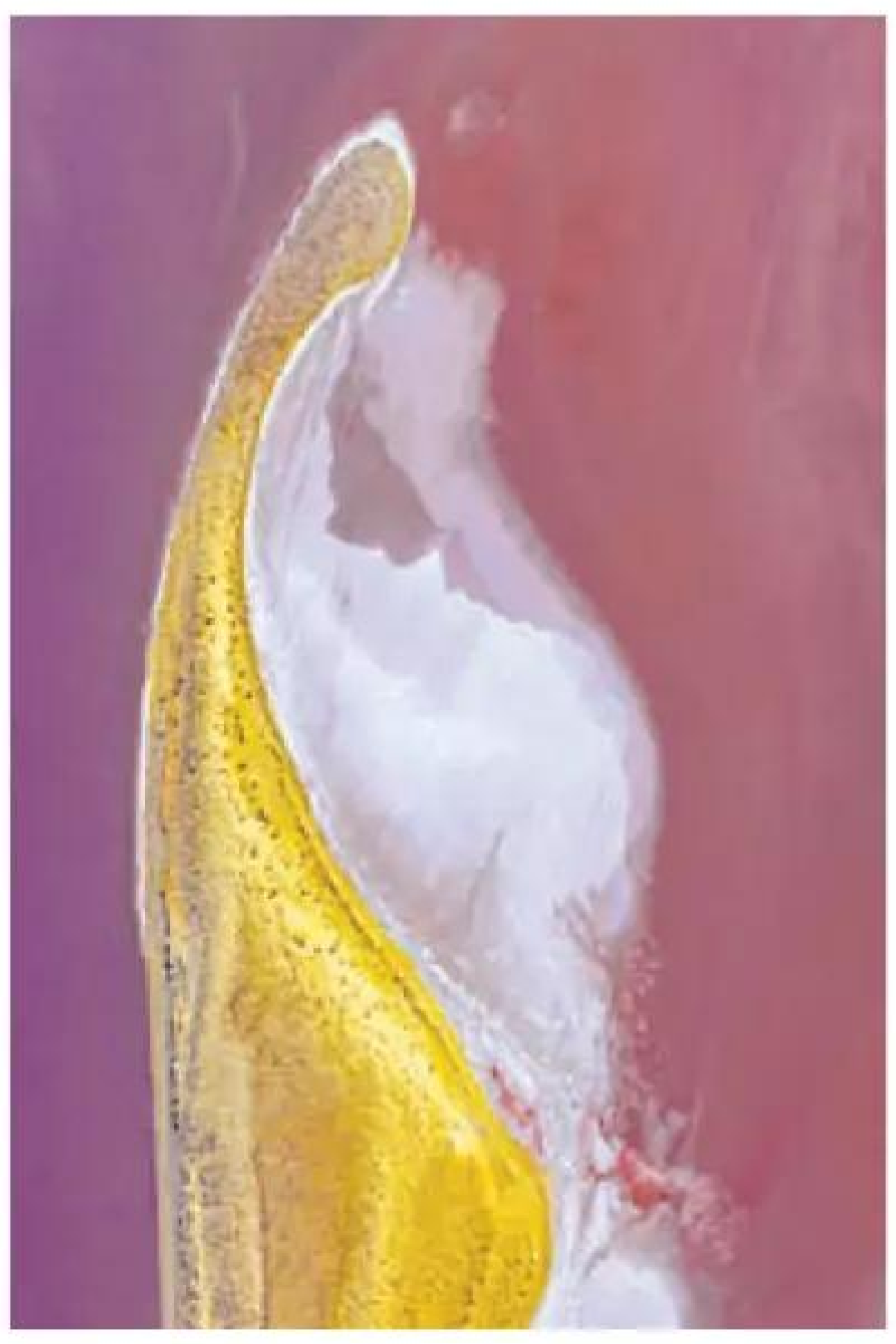
18. JOANNE COSTANZO

EPHEMERAL



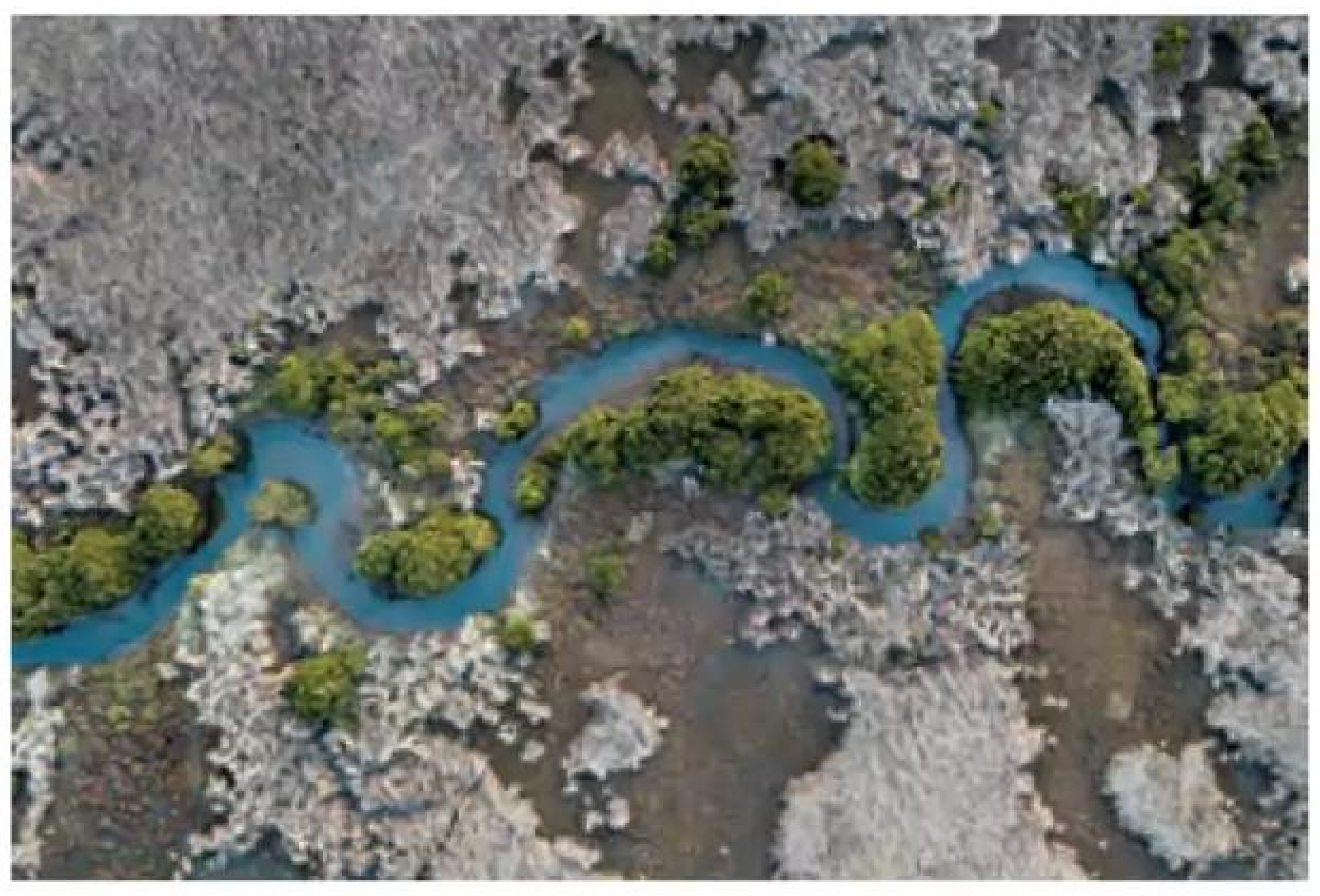


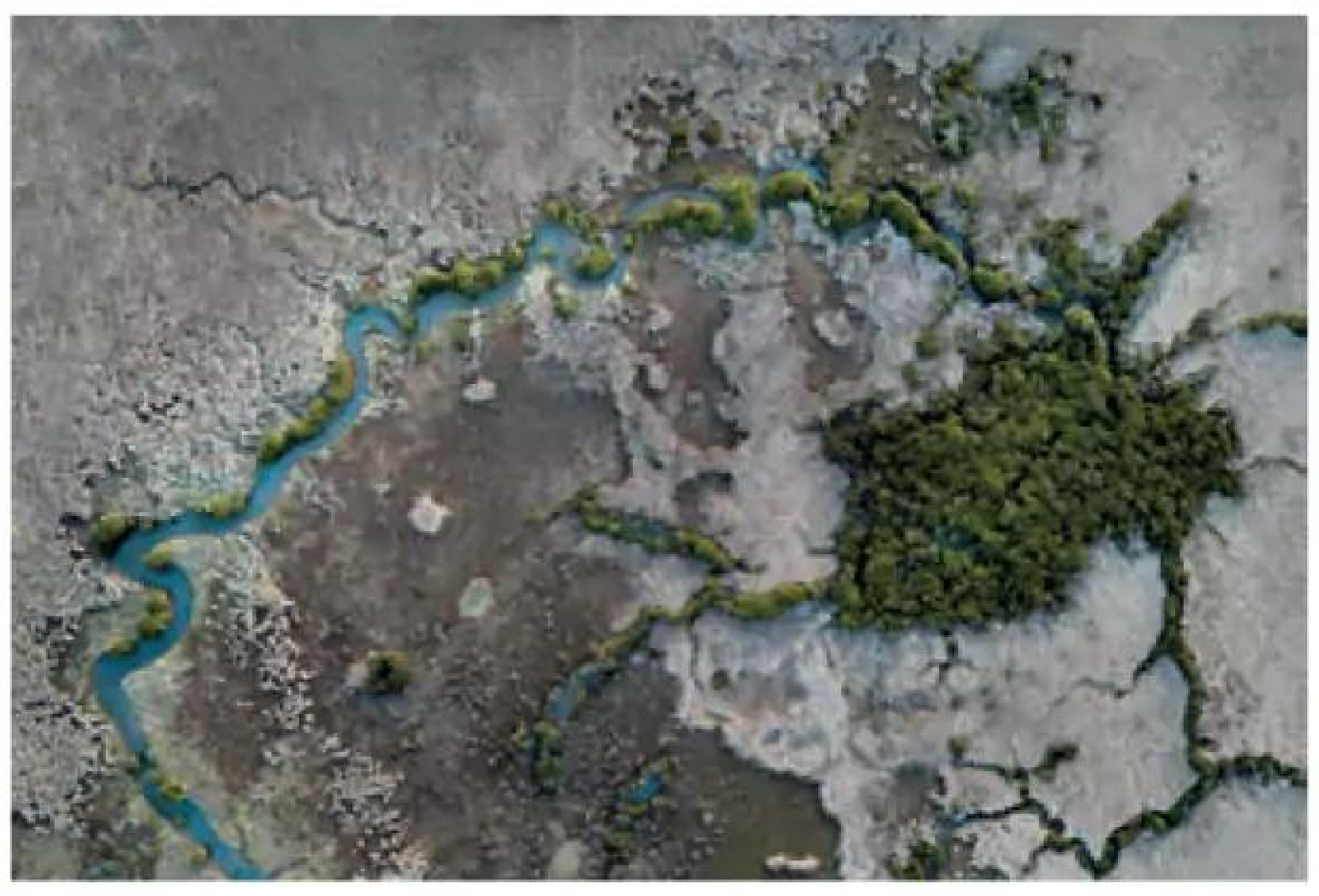


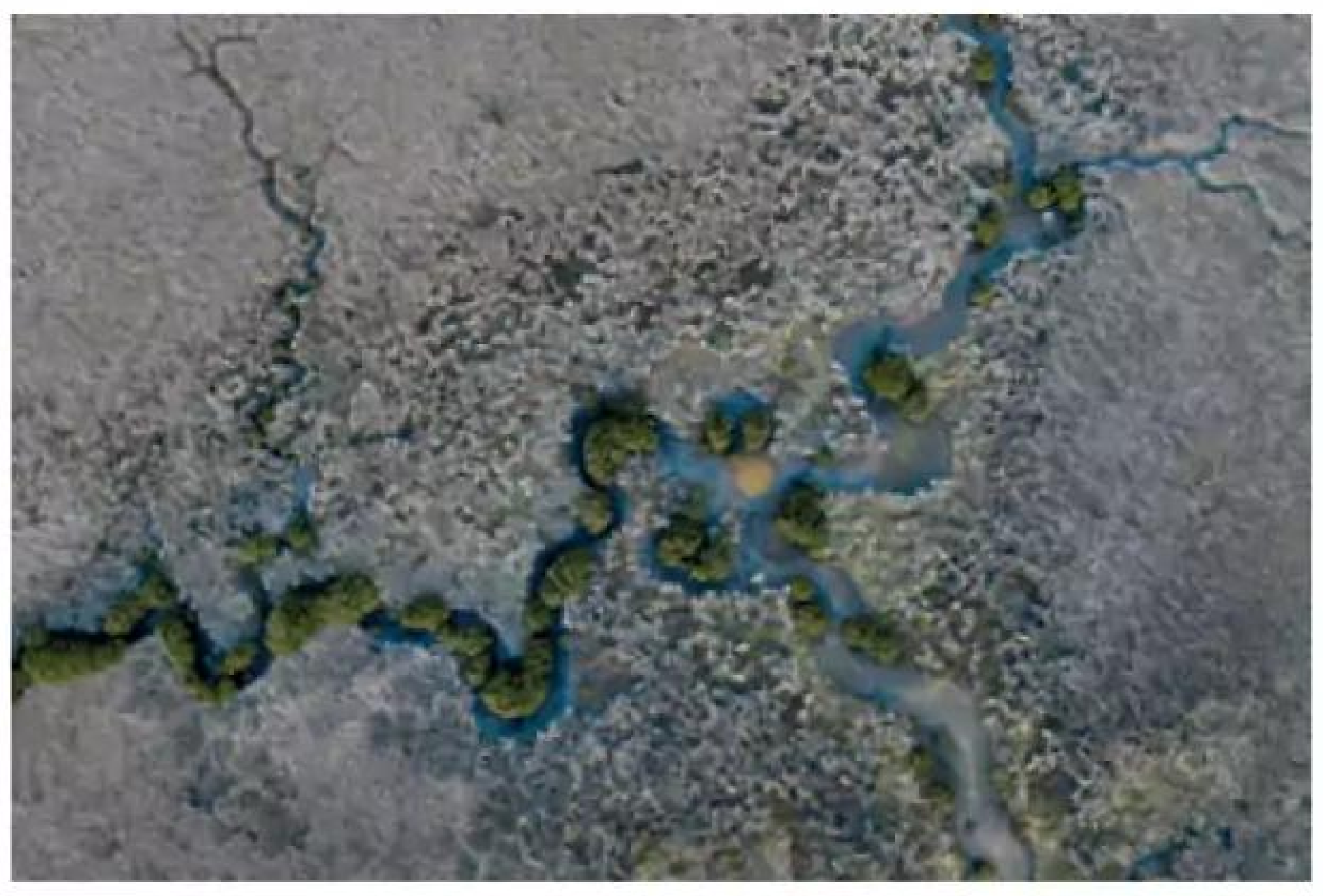


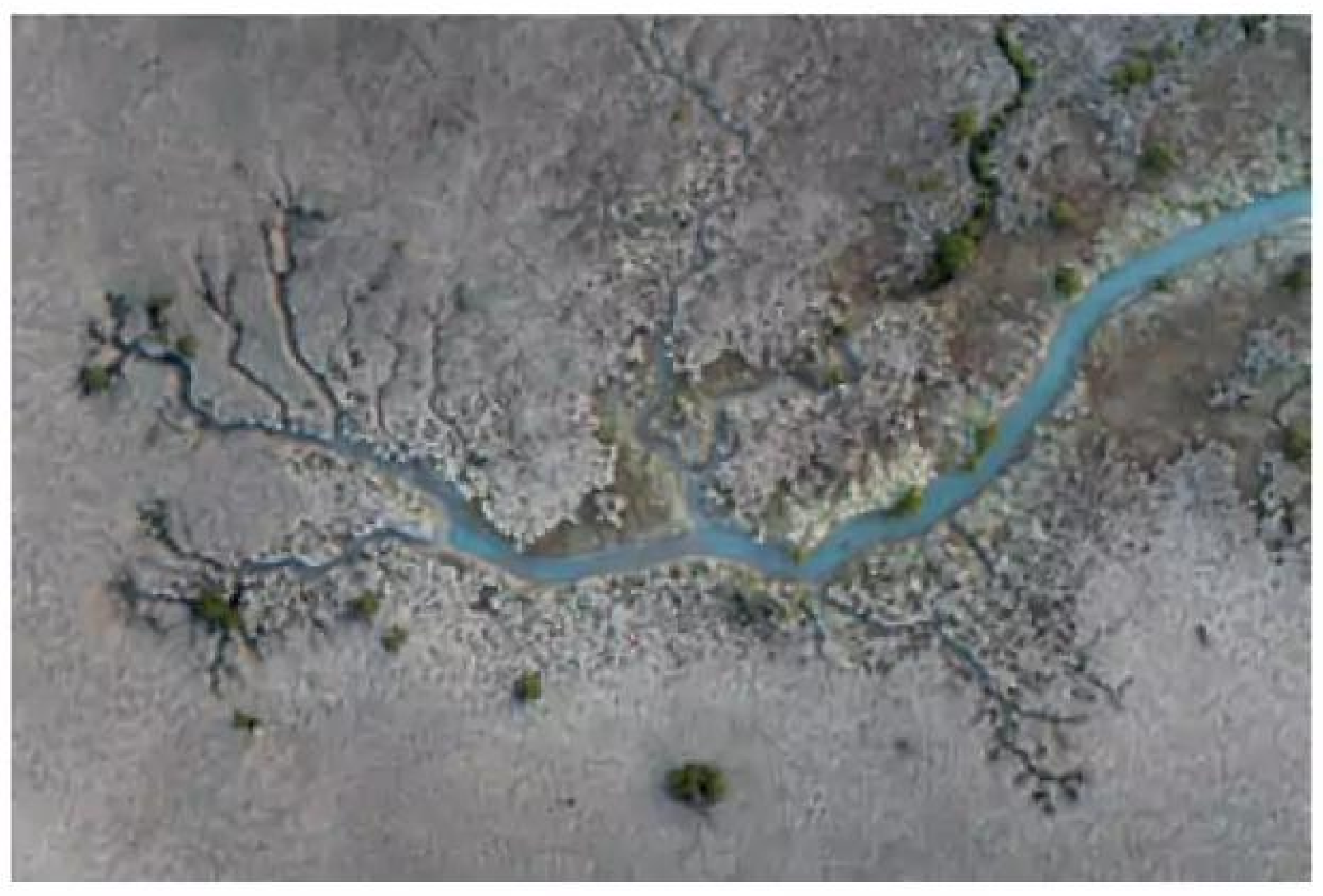
19. KIM TALENTO

VEINS OF THE EARTH



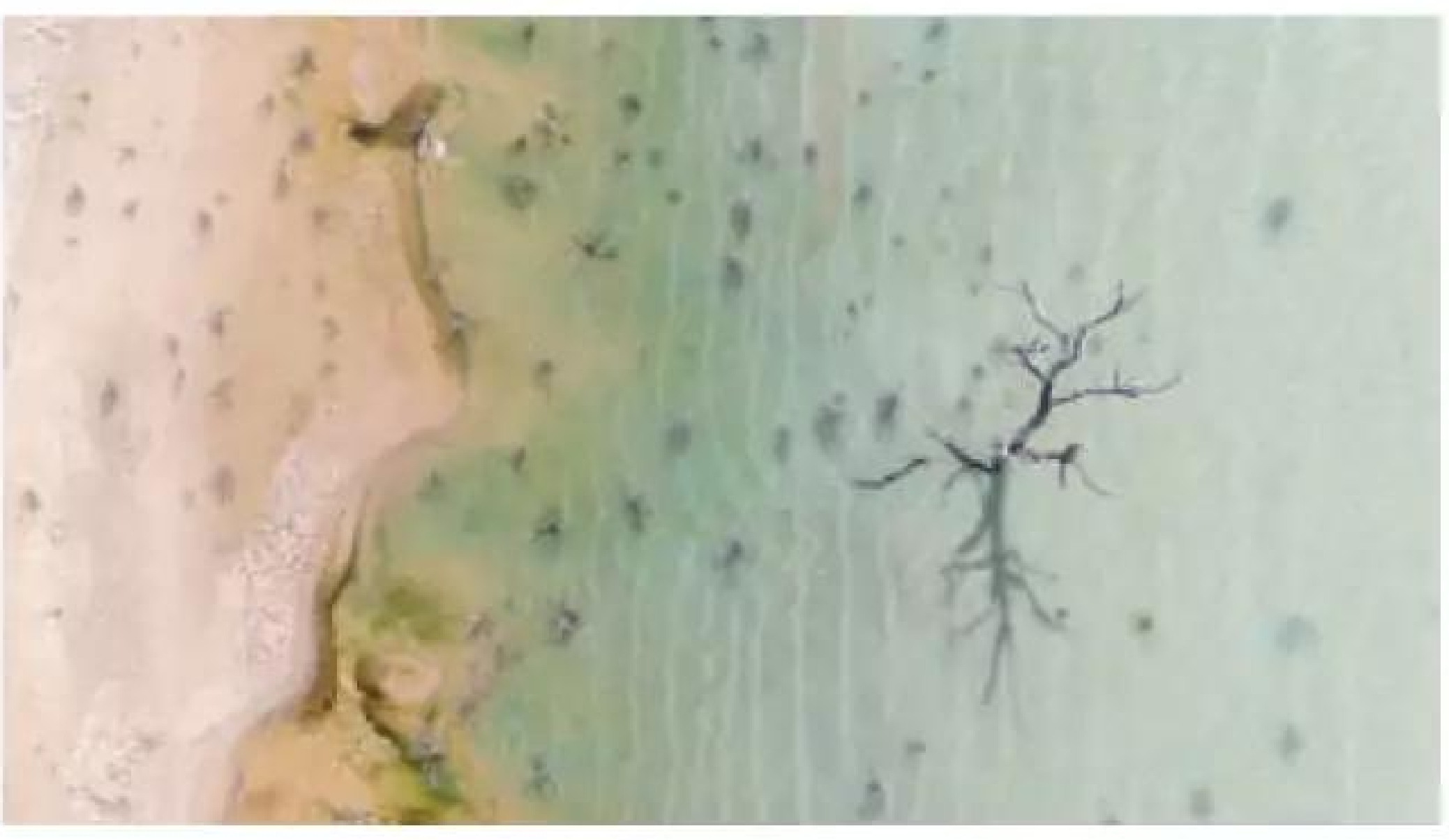


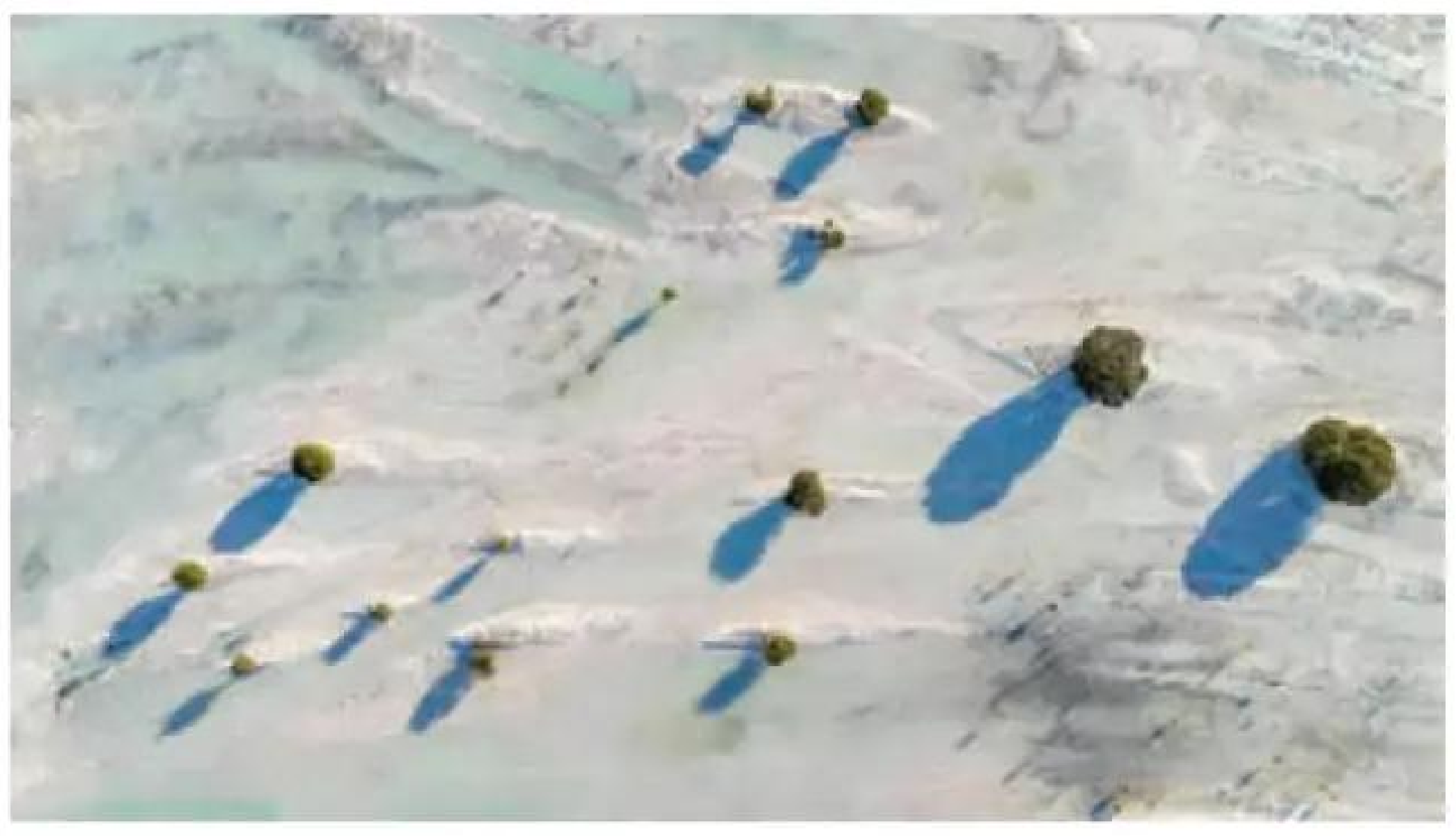


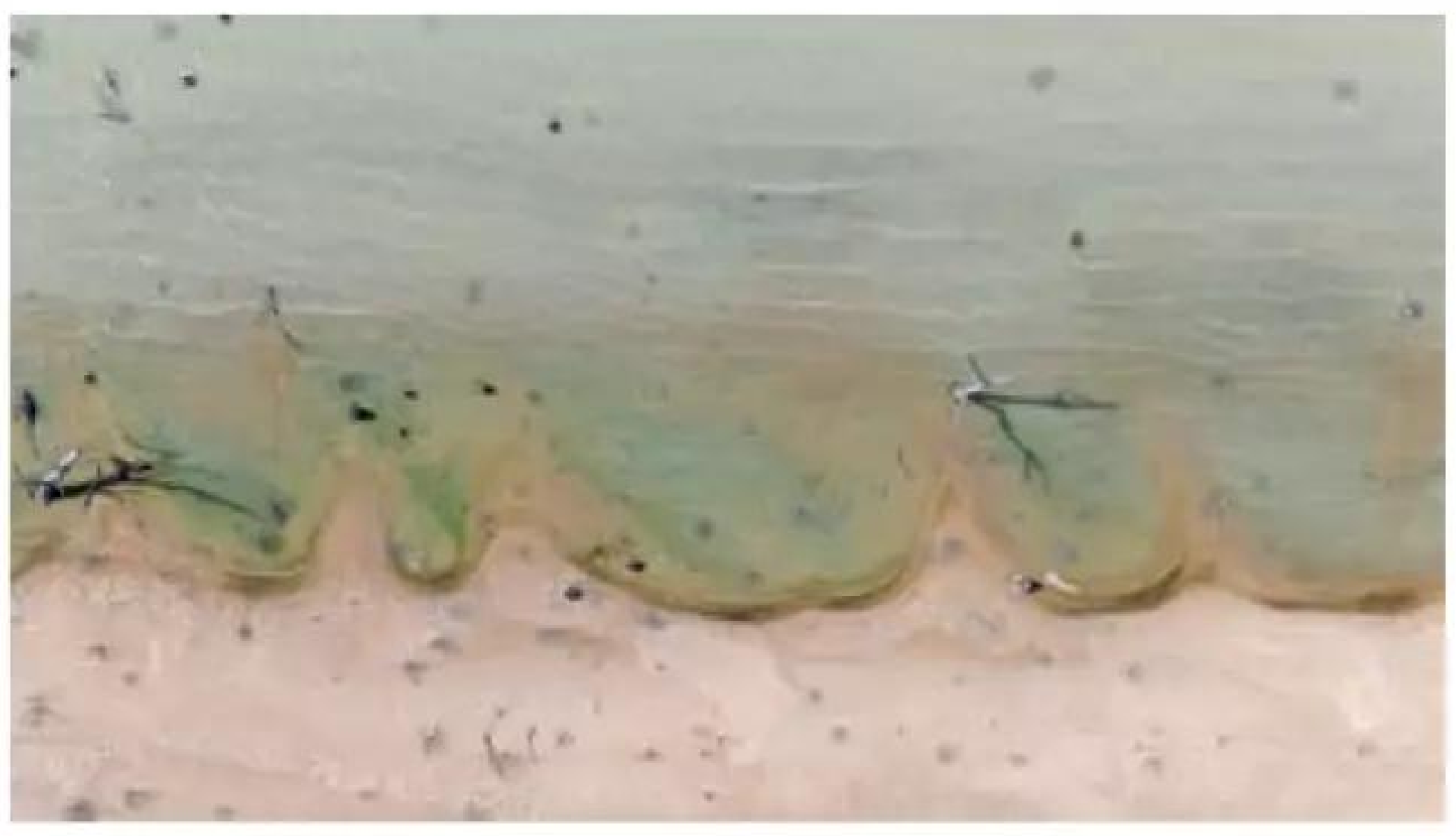


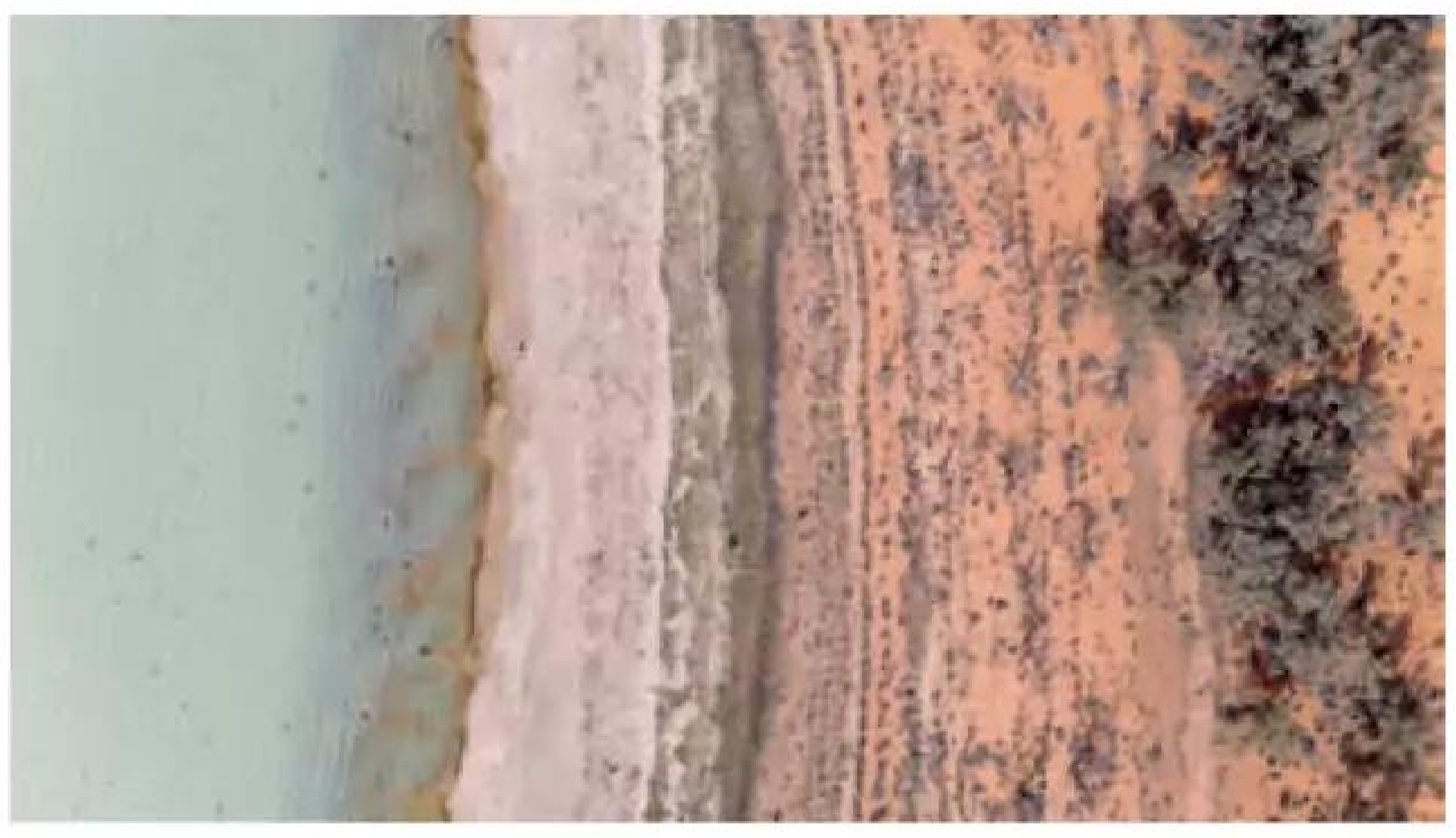
20. STUART TEMPLETON

OUTBACK LAKES



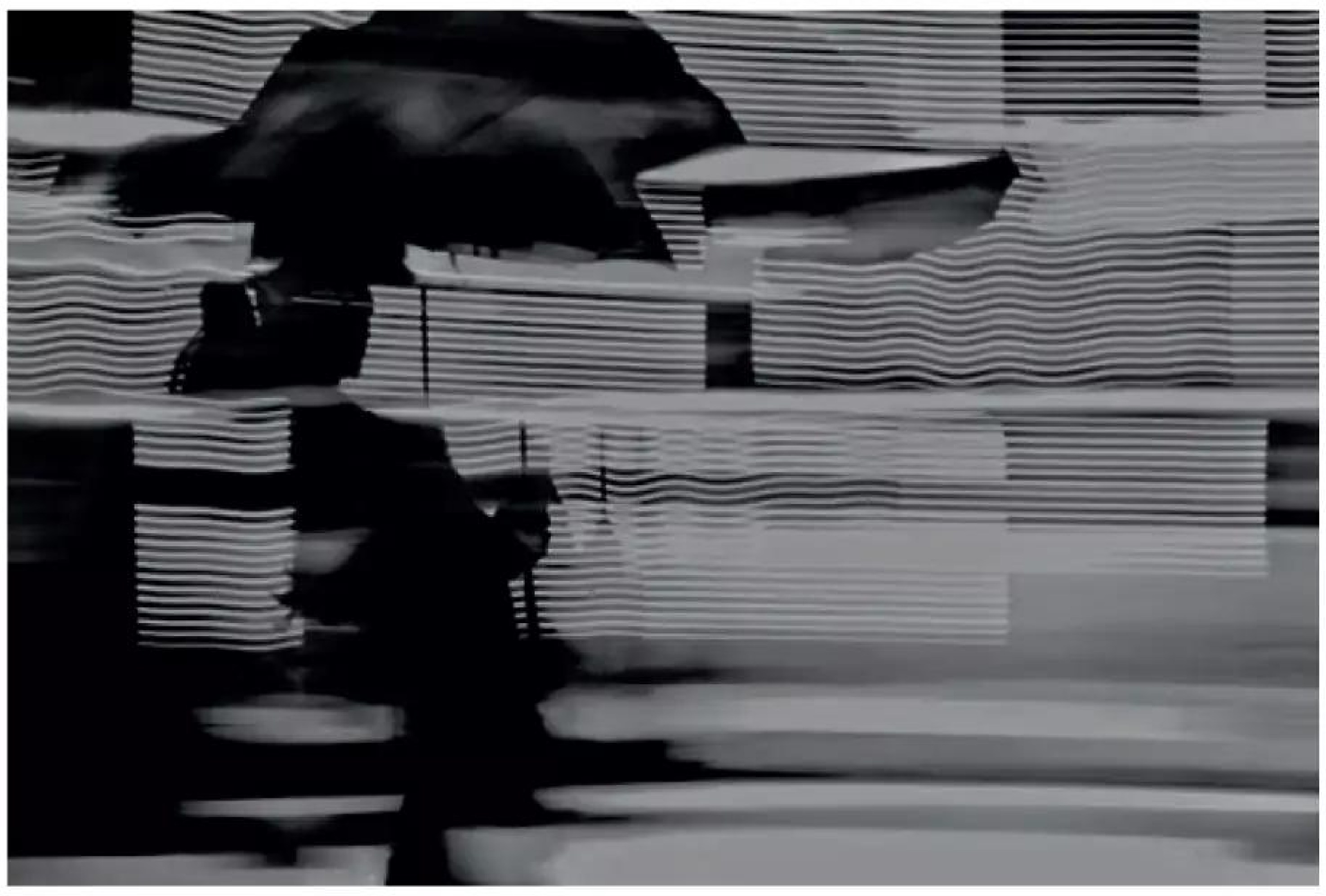






WINNER

BLACK & WHITE



ANDREW TAN

@andrew._.tan

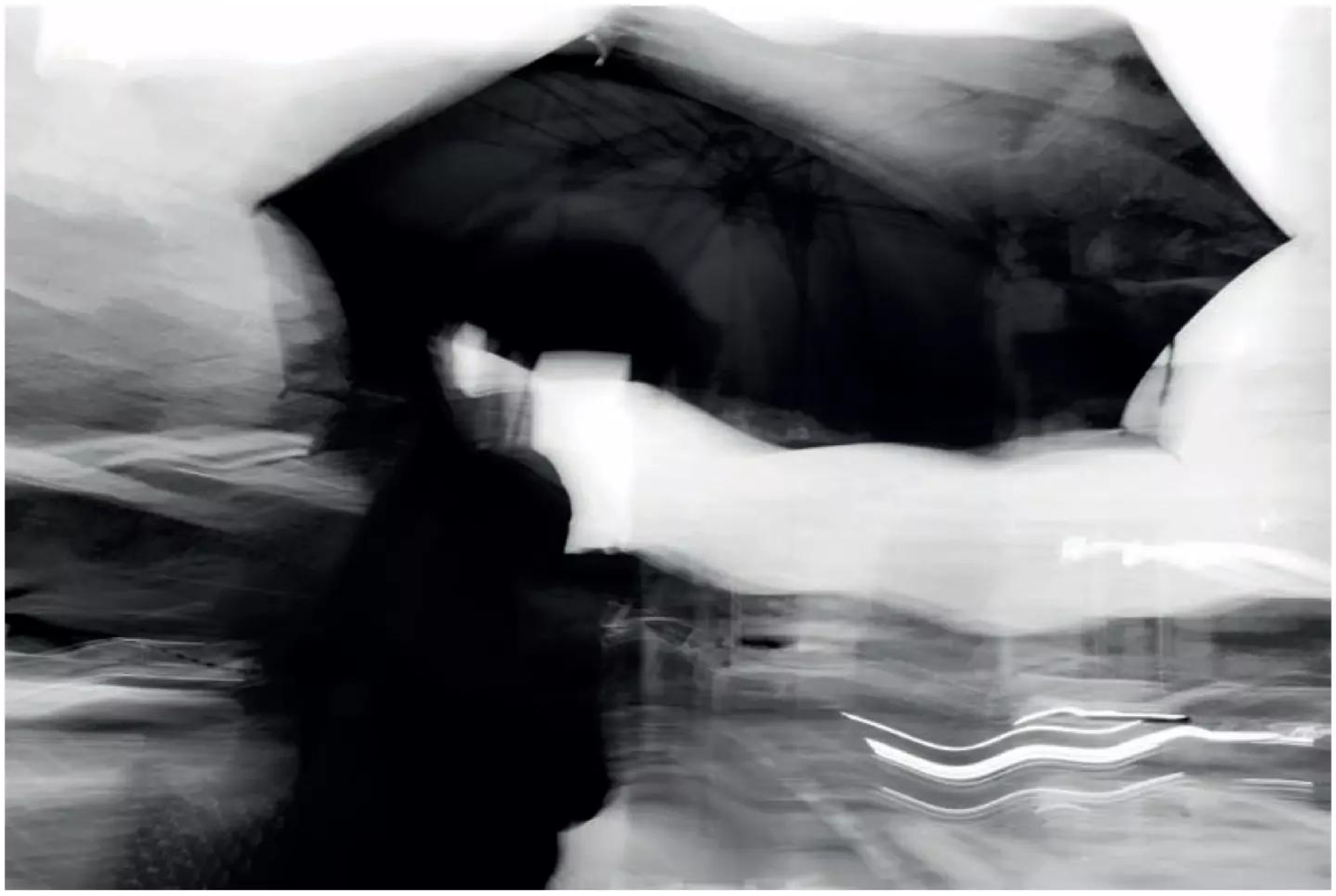
UNDER COVER

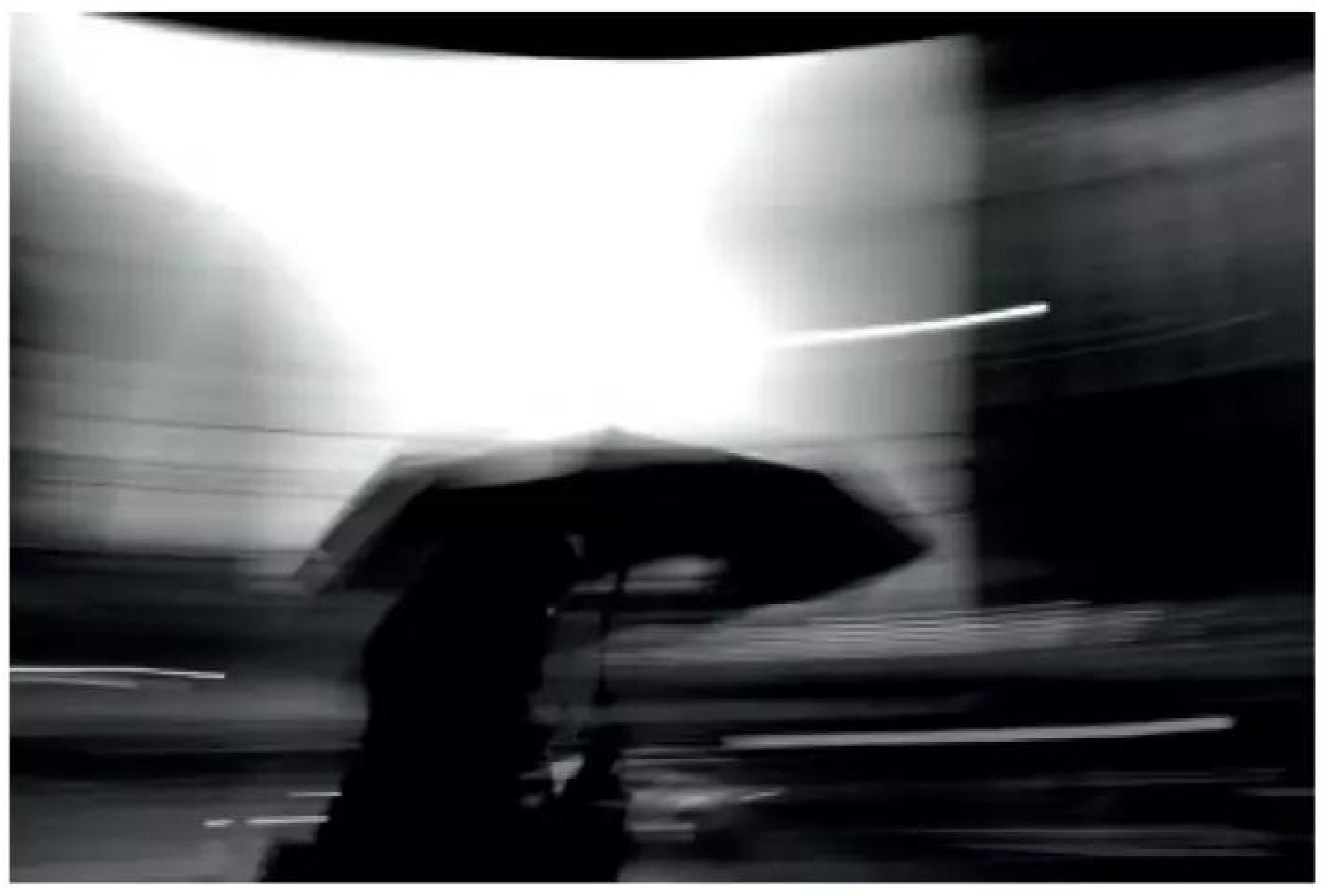
BASED in Melbourne, Andrew Tan's winning Black and White series was captured during a photo walk in the city on a wet, wintery June day.

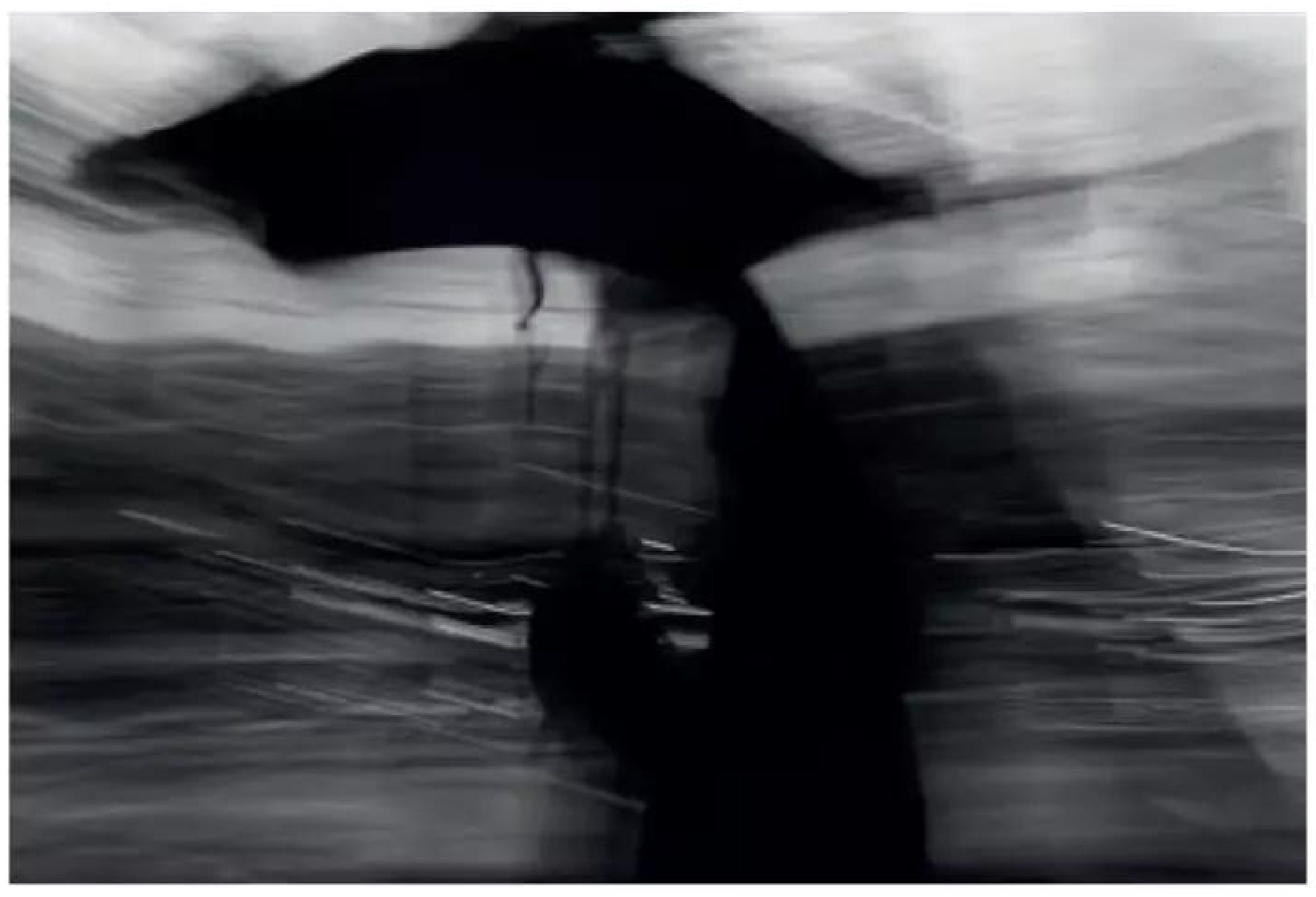
"The assignment was 'umbrellas', but the low-light conditions inspired me to take a different approach," he says.

Using a slow shutter speed of around one second, made possible by the dark skies, he aimed to capture the movement and energy of umbrellas navigating the rain-soaked streets.

The black and white treatment transformed the images into something otherworldly, with motion blur and stark contrasts creating an abstract, almost dreamlike quality. "It's not every day you shoot umbrellas at one-second exposures in natural light," he notes. The result was a creative and moody approach that impressed the judges this year.







WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

HELEN WHITTLE: Andrew's black and white series is striking in its use of bold lines and intentional blur, transforming a simple figure into something abstract and visually poetic. The creative compositions invite the viewer to interpret movement, mood, and meaning in their own way. The images feel both dynamic and contemplative. The use of black and white along with the blur creates beautiful, artistic images that show a strong and creative vision.

DOUWE DIJKSTRA: We've all been there. The heavens open and 'Umbrella-geddon' is upon us. But unlike when most of us would run for cover, it's all here beautifully captured in this dynamic, creative and captivating series by Andrew. The frames are full of frantic movement, striking contrast, sheer panic, and abstract beauty.

PRIZE: $1,000 cash, a Western Digital prize pack valued at $1,500, and a Photobookshop HD layflat photobook valued at $289. Plus, three Retouch4Me photo retouching apps.

RUNNER-UP

BLACK & WHITE

CASSANDRA MCMAHON

@cassiefromtville

PARTS OF A DOG

FORMER police forensics officer Cassandra McMahon has recently shifted her focus to photography, and having moved to Tasmania, is now pursuing a career in the arts at the University of Tasmania.

Her Black and White category runner-up series, *Parts of a Dog*, is part of a larger first-semester assessment exploring the ethics of dog breeds and how our relationships with these animals are shaped. At the same time, she used the series to explore her interest in black and white photography, focusing on how forms are highlighted and textures emphasised.

"My love for dogs is one I hold close to my heart, and creating conversation around the ethics of breeding practices and our responsibility towards them is important," she says.

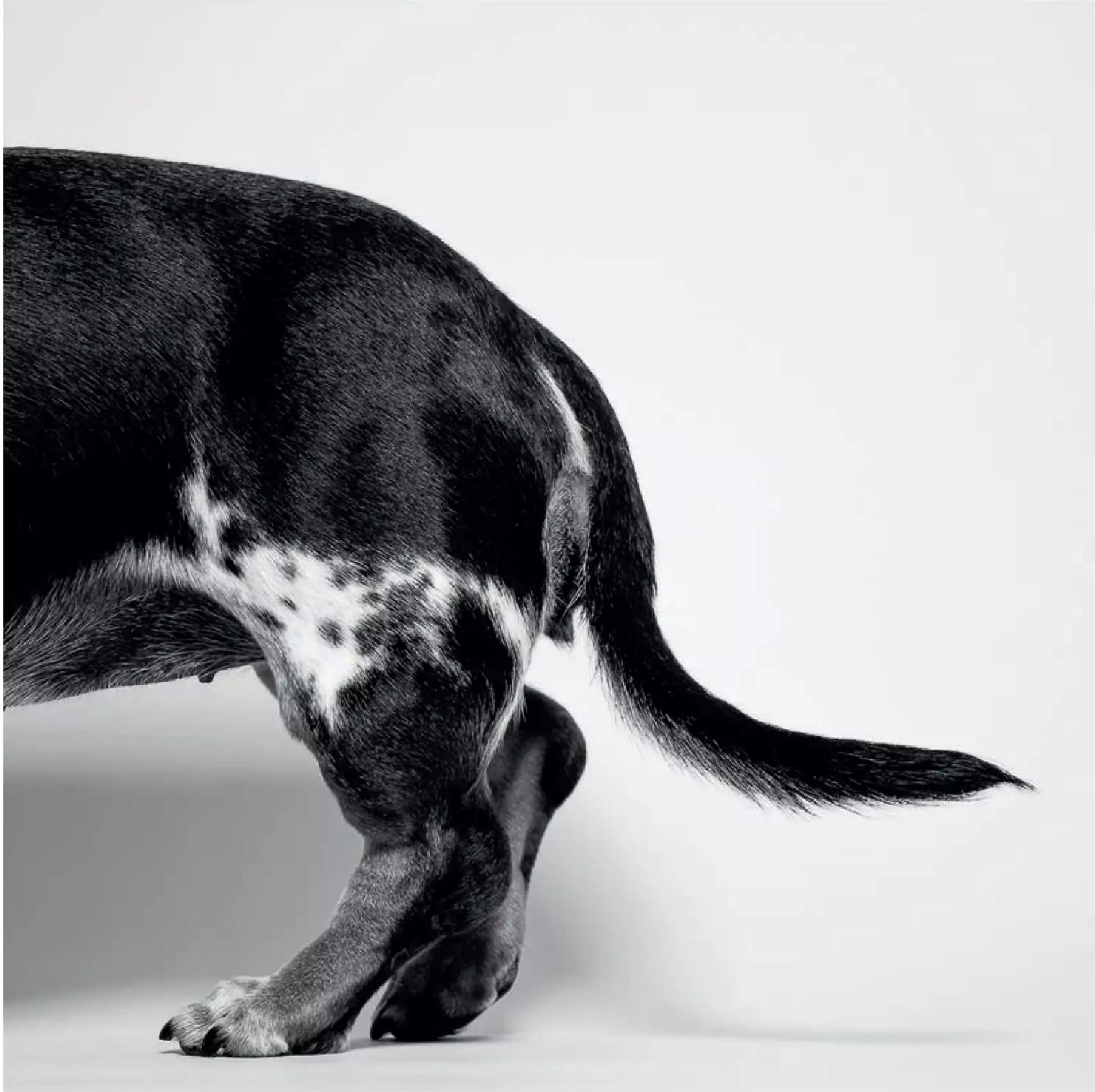
The resulting series impressed the judges, with its quirky subject matter and unique approach that went beyond traditional portraiture.

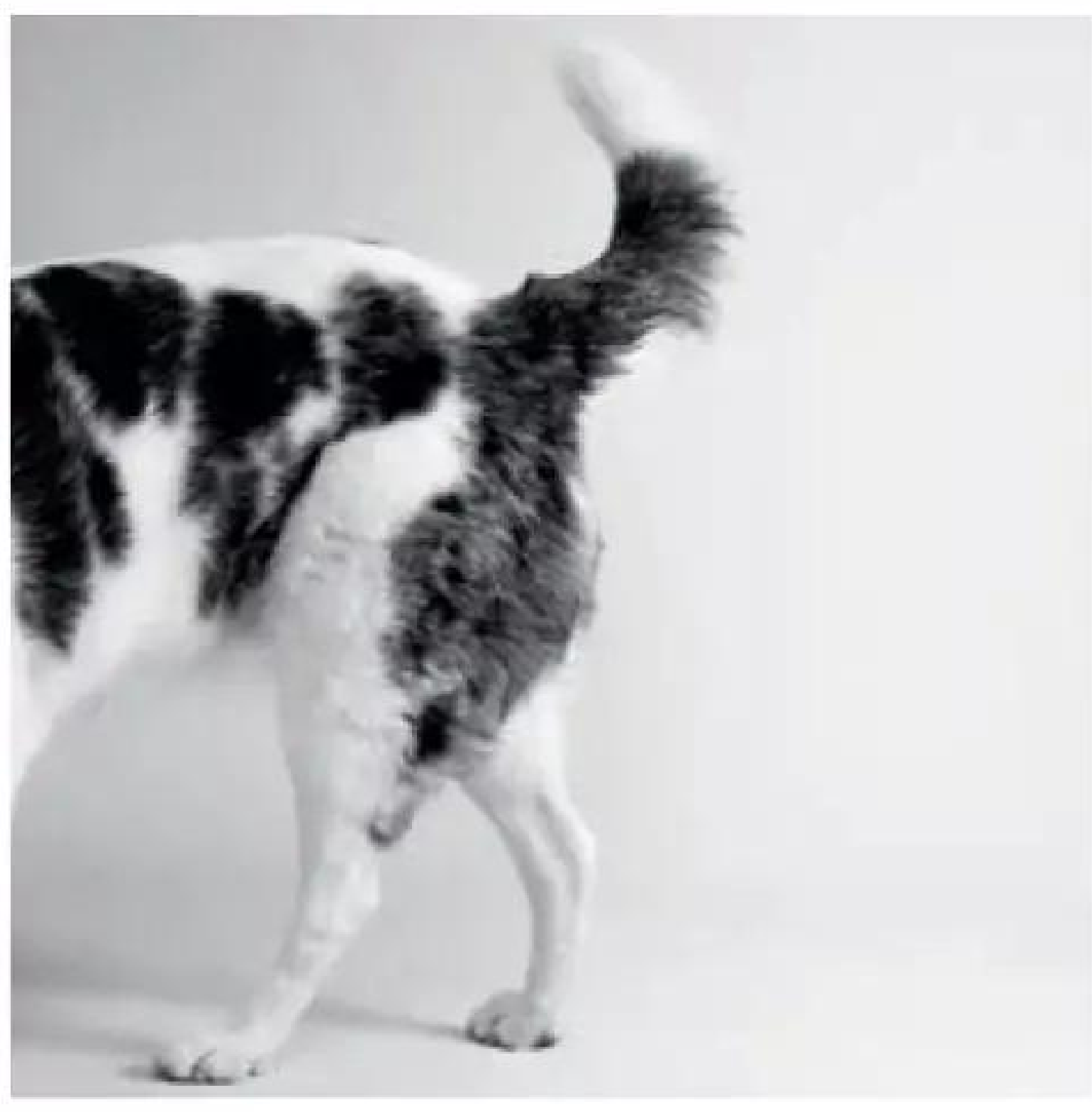
WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

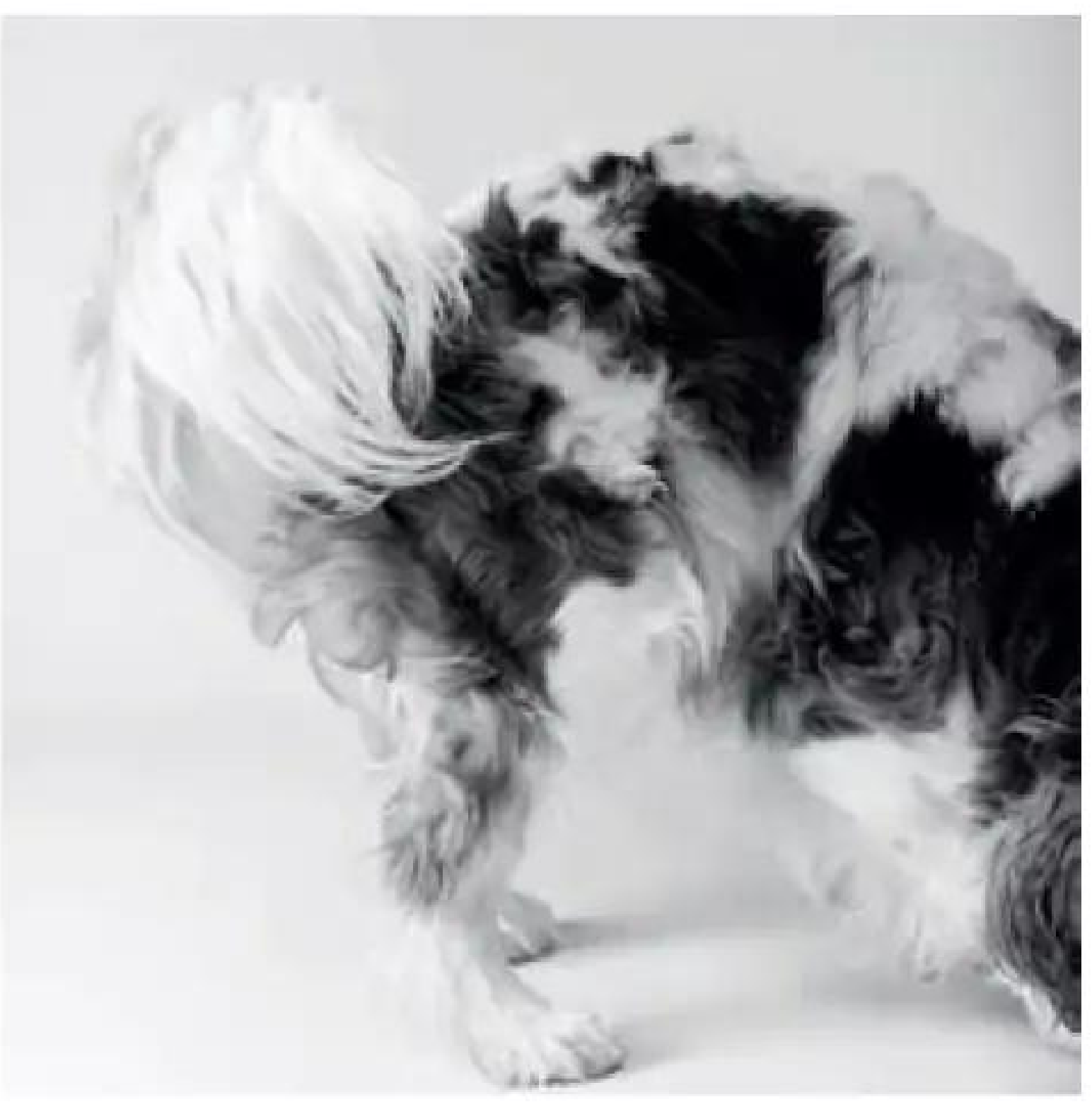
DOUWE DIJKSTRA: This series put a smile on my face. Man's best friend captured in a unique, comical but still recognisable way. I loved the beautiful subtle contrast between the soft texture of the dog's coat placed against the quiet light grey background.

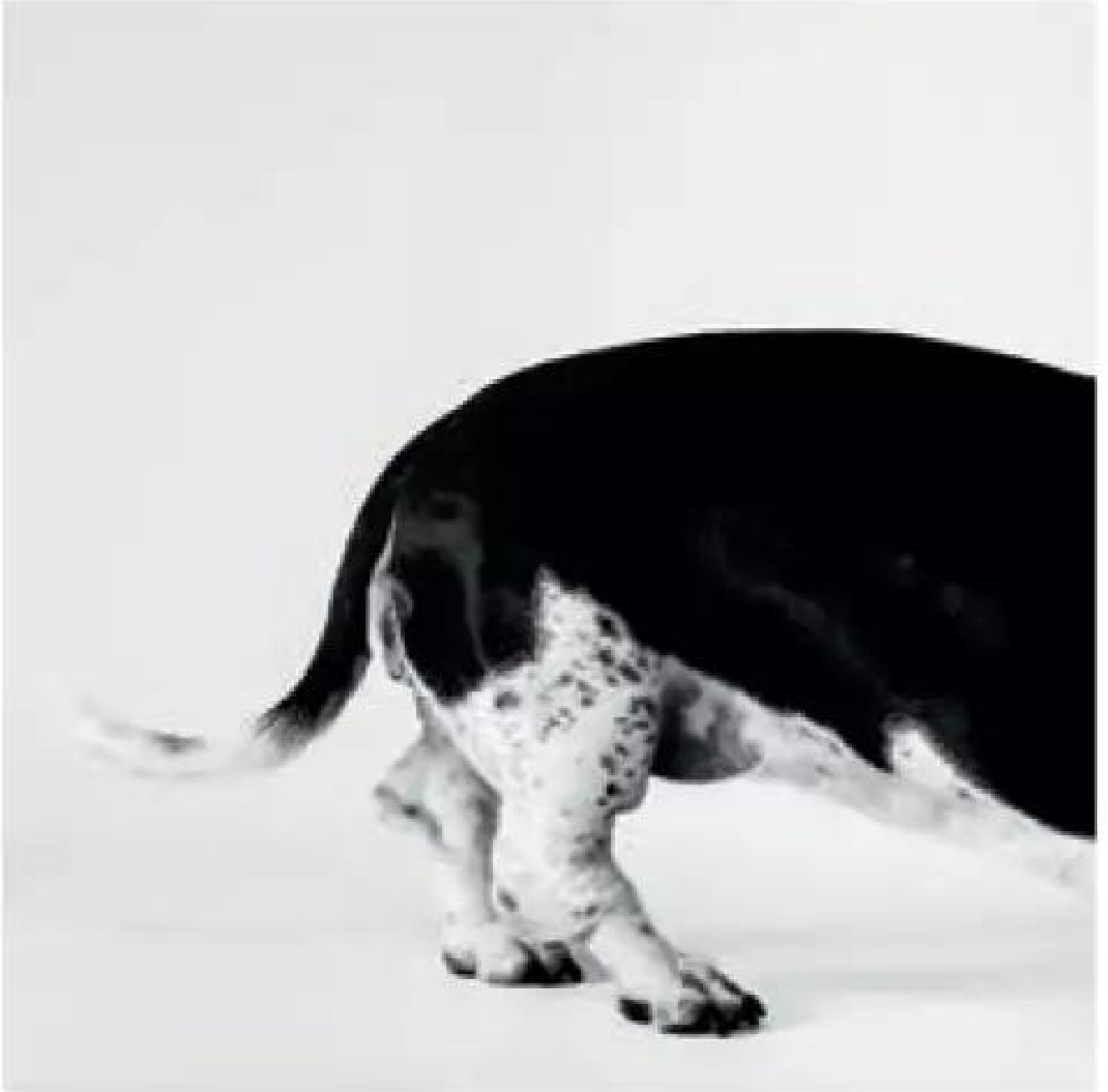
DOUG GIMESY: Like Douwe said, each individual image is quirky and made me smile. Together, they made me smile even more. Cassie's series is fun, while also nicely and consistently executed.

PRIZE: $200 Ted's Cameras voucher.



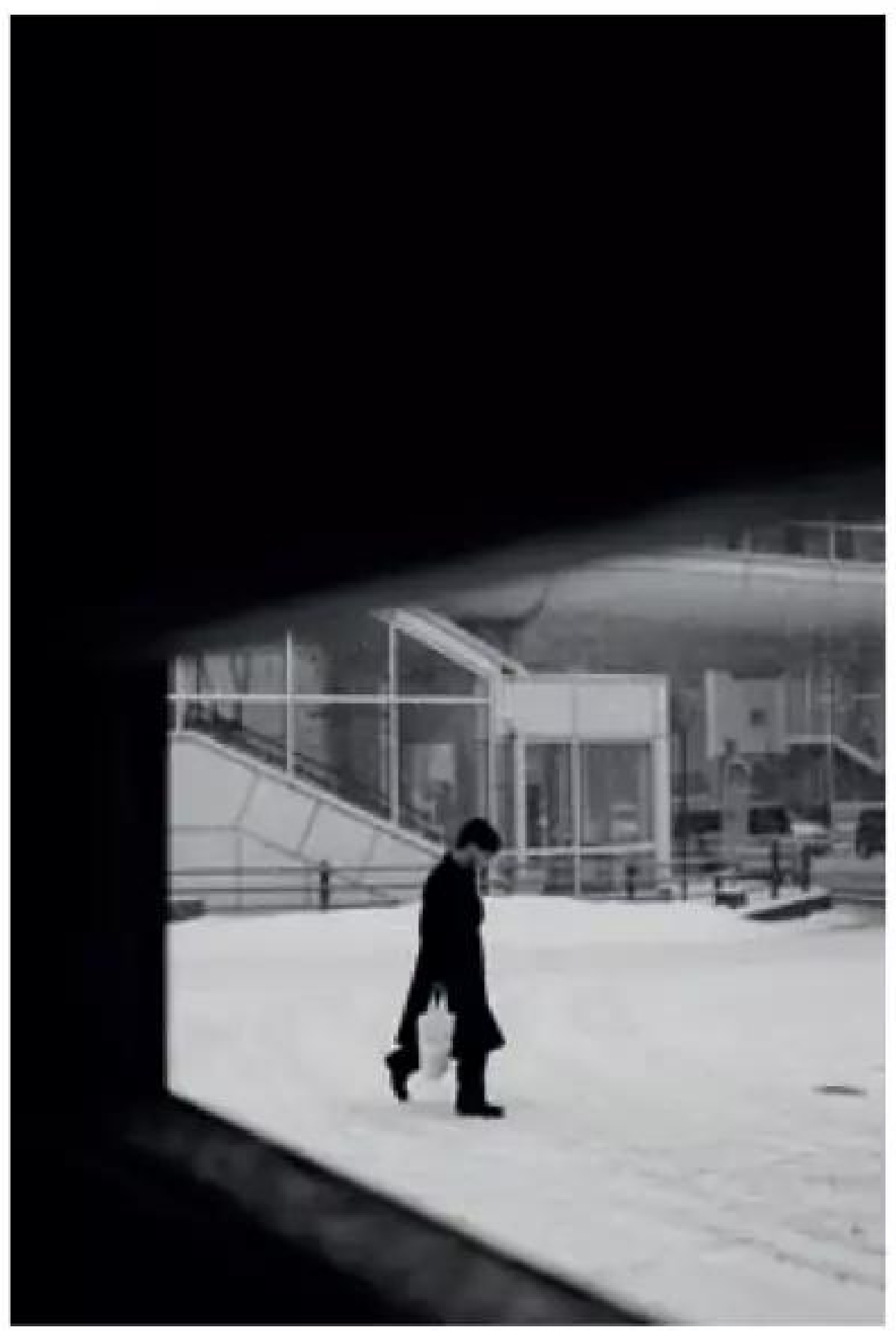


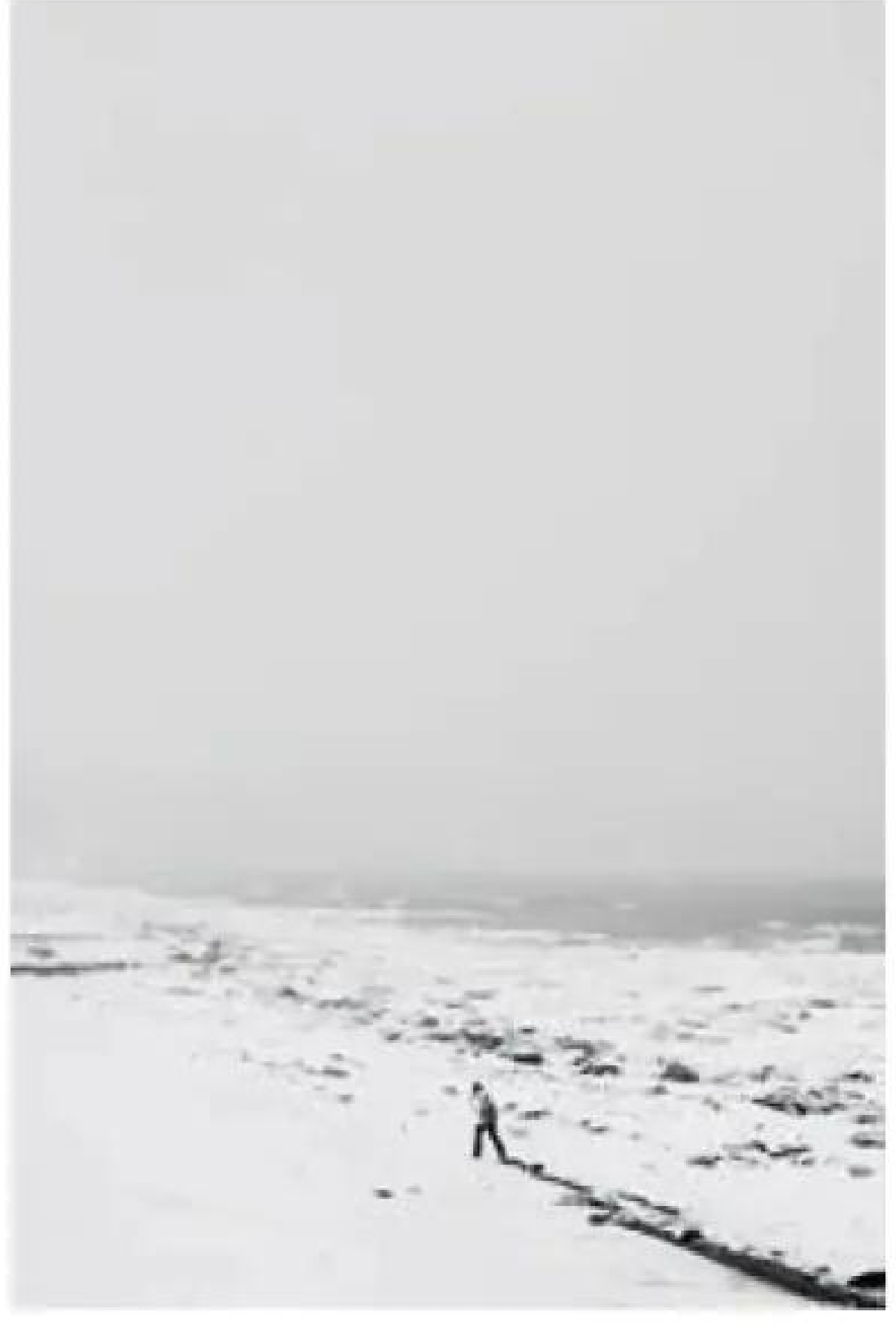


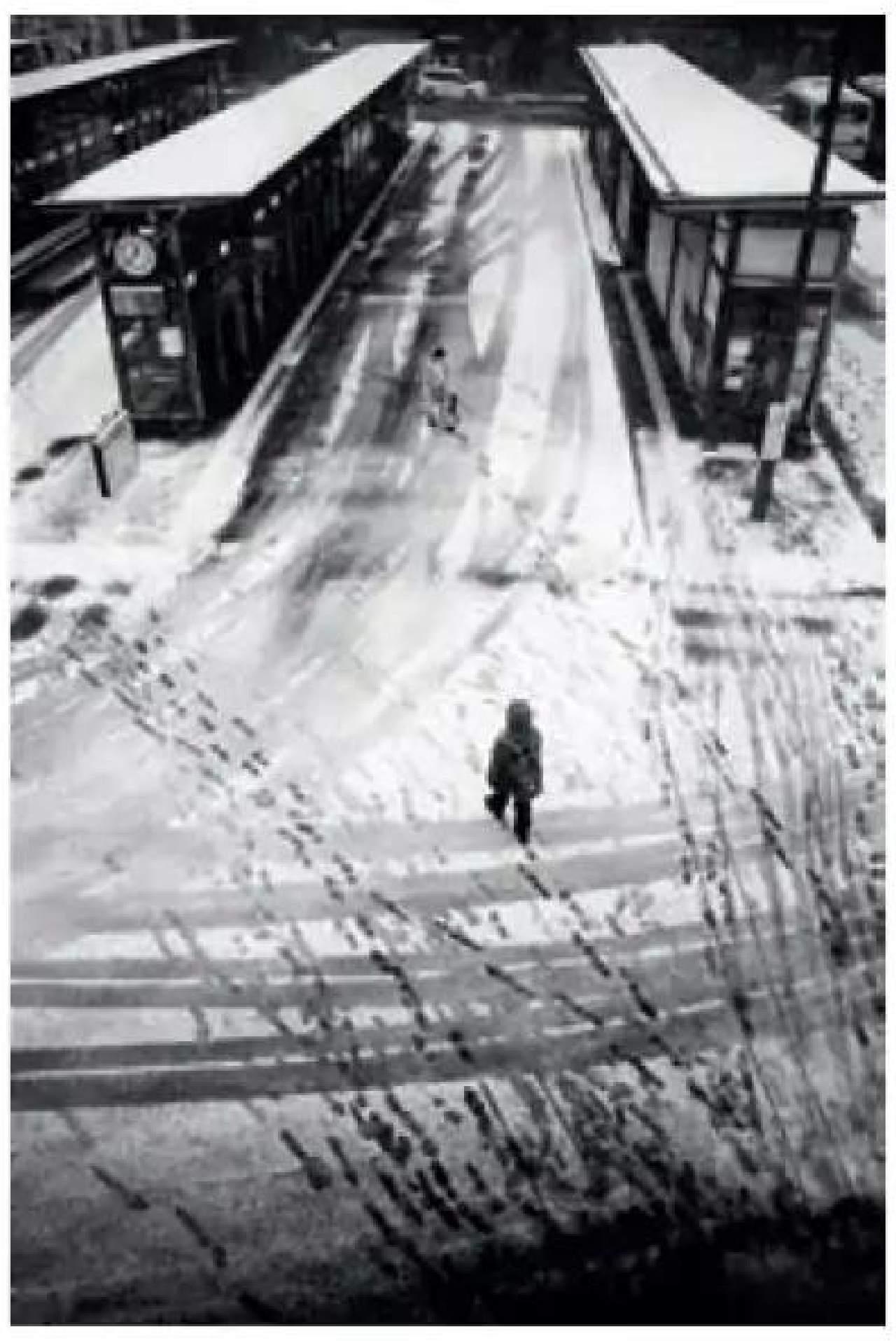


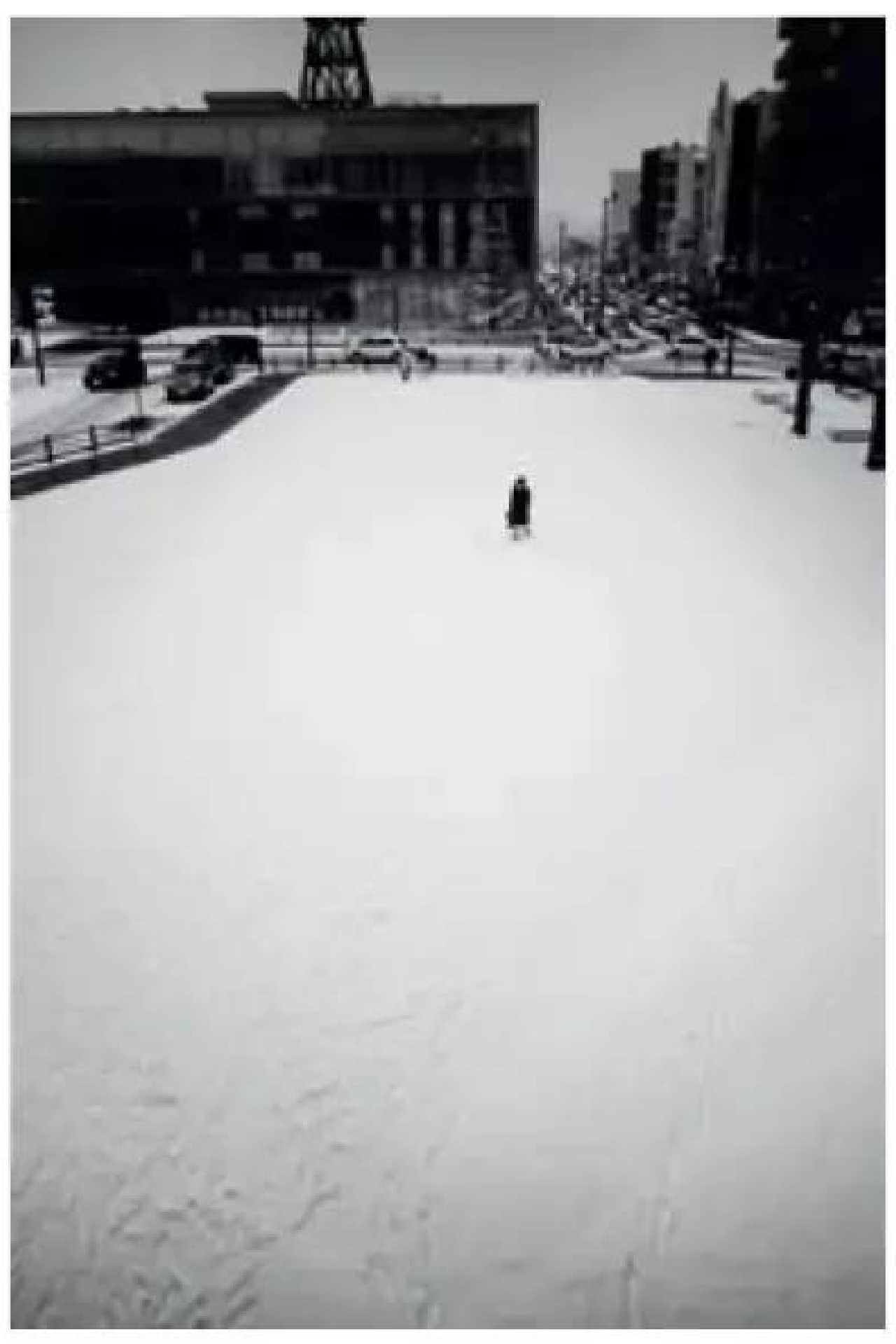
3. PEPIJN THIJSSE

STILLNESS IN MOTION



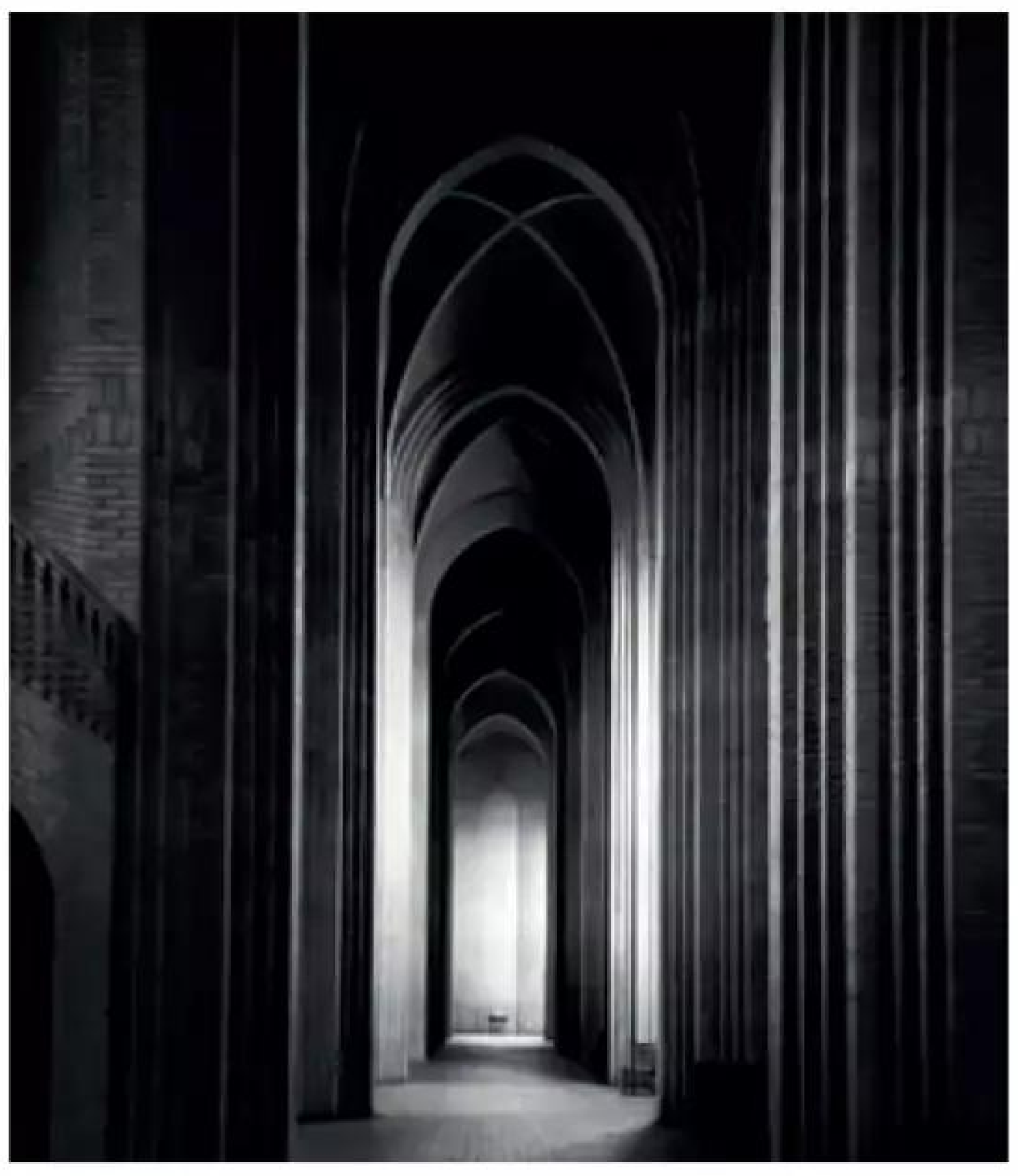


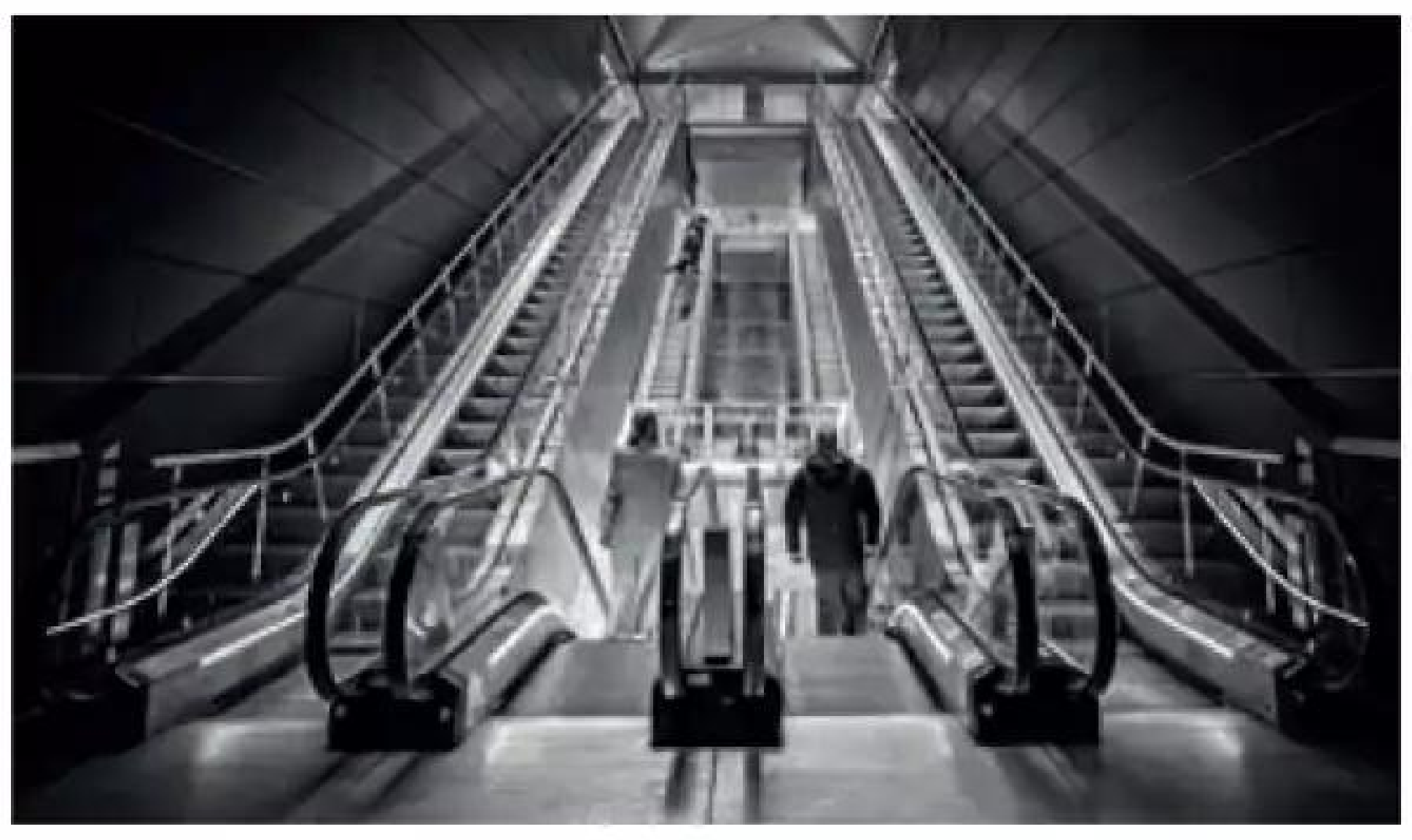


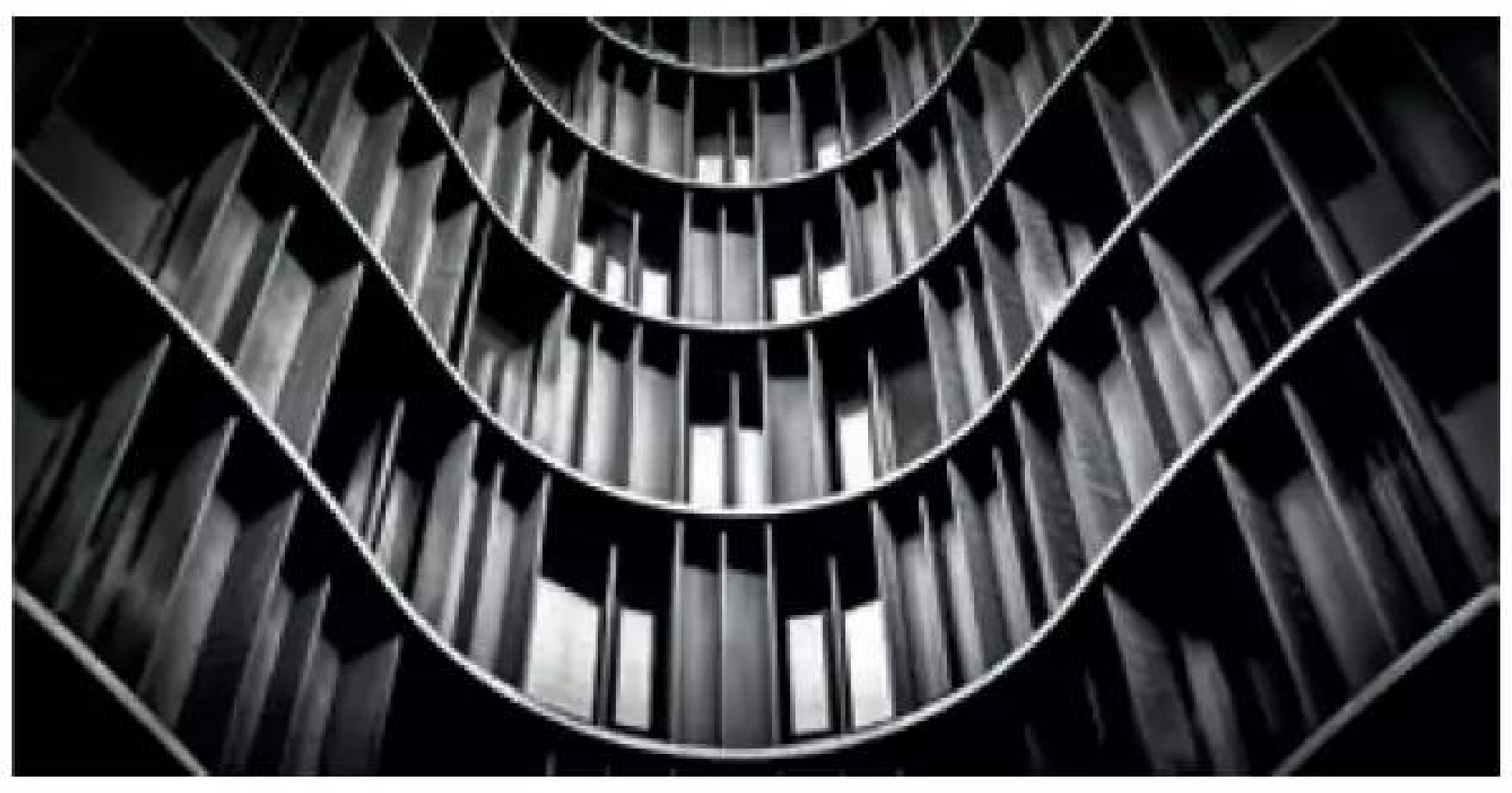


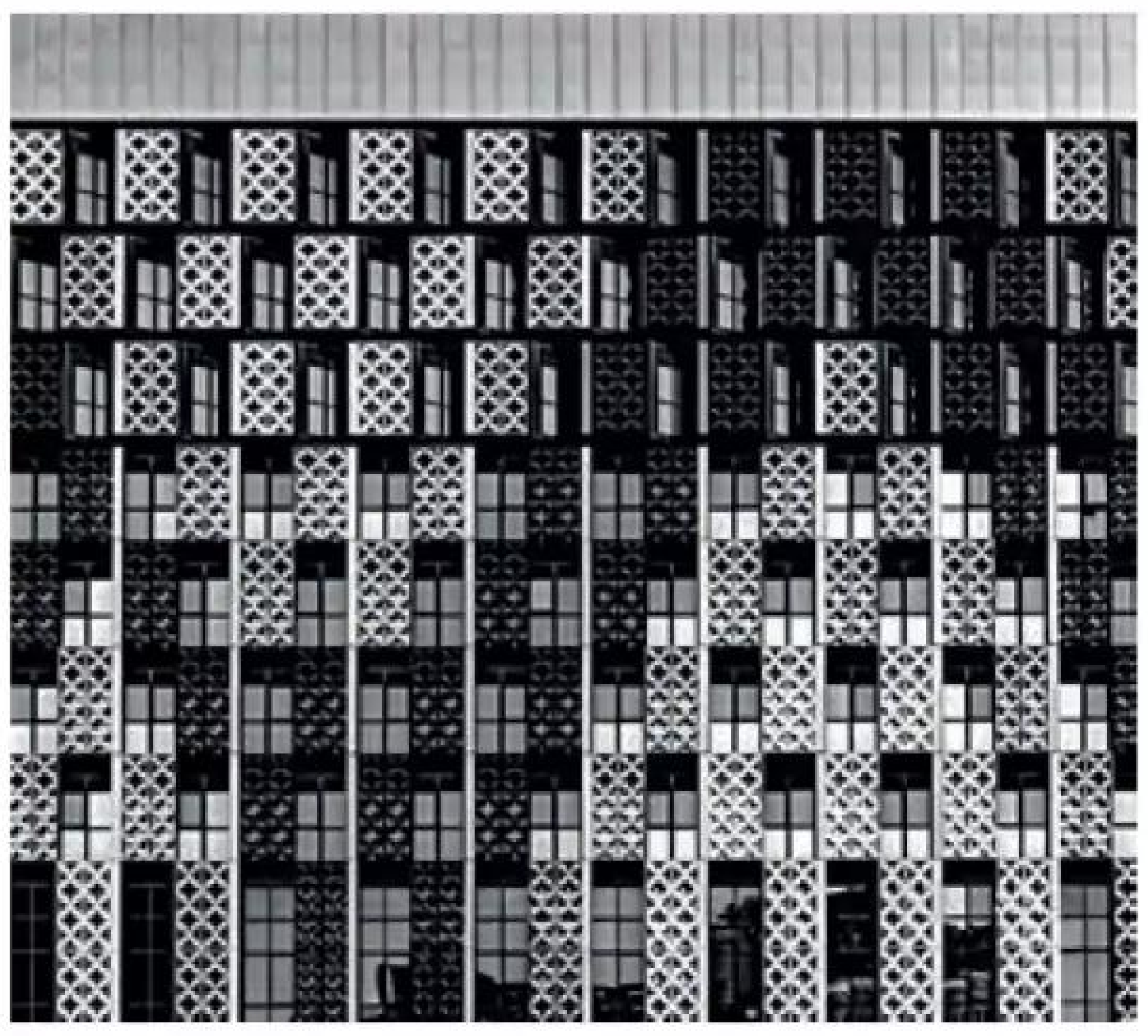
4. IRMA FERREIRA

URBAN ABSTRACTS IN MONO



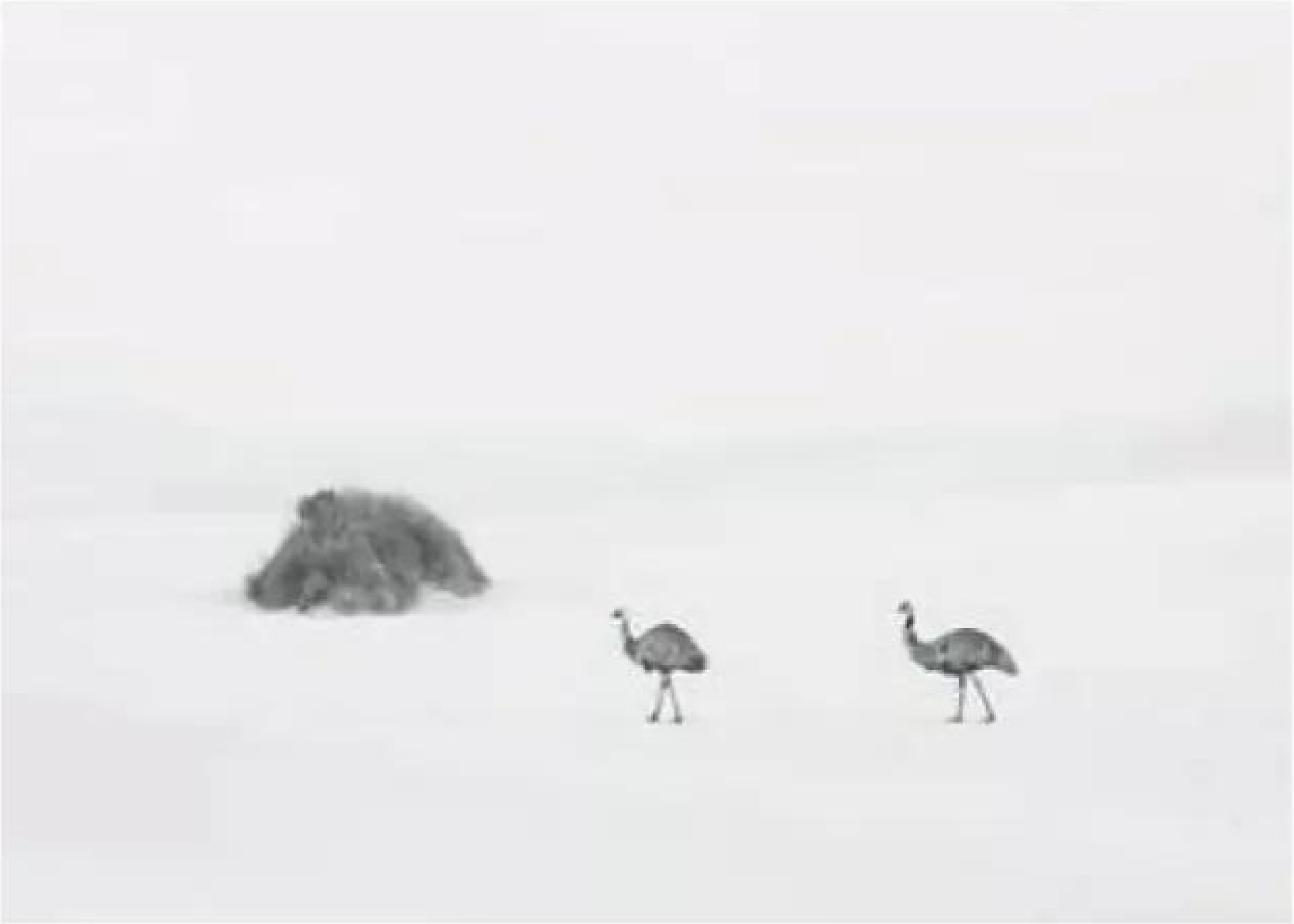


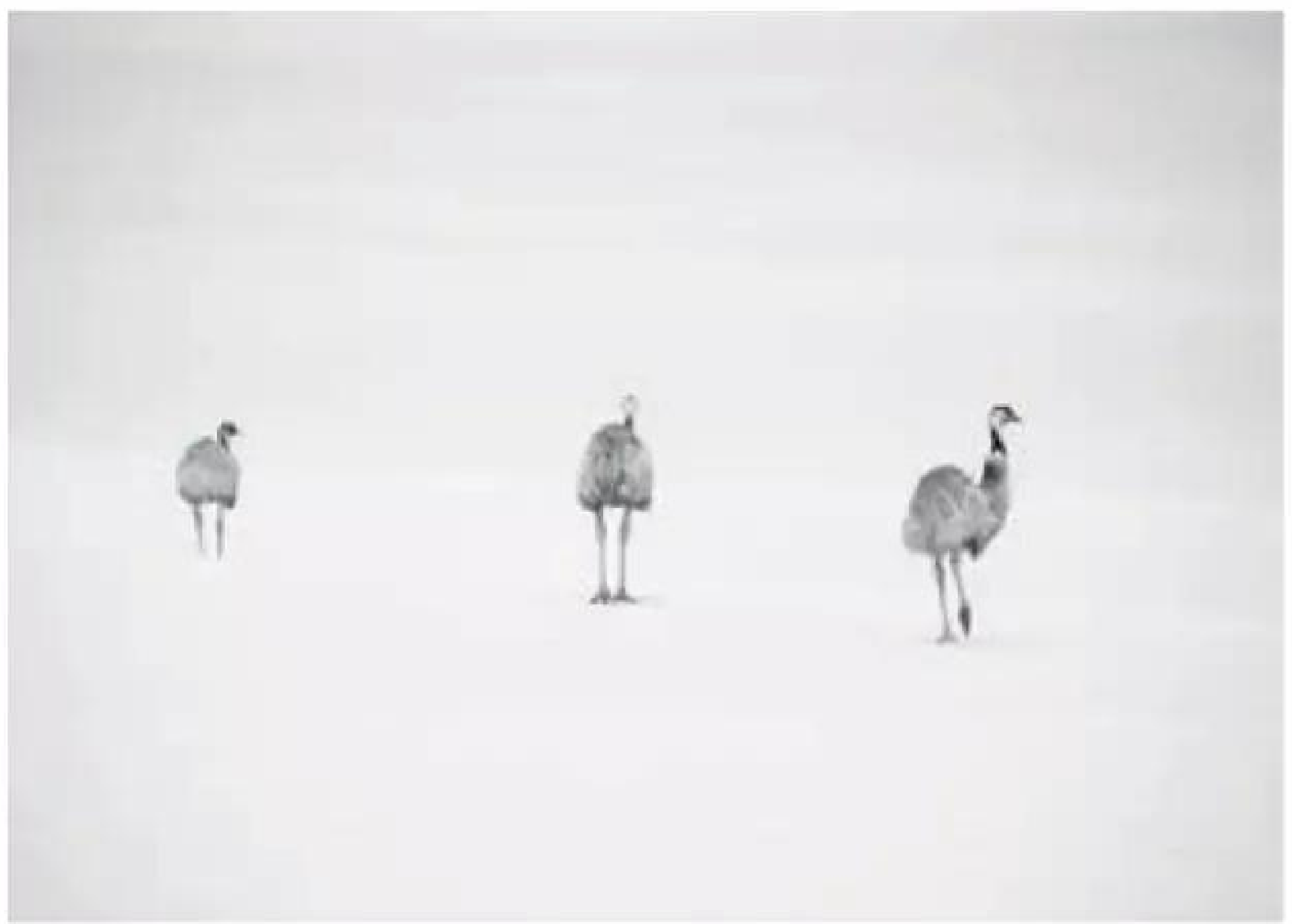


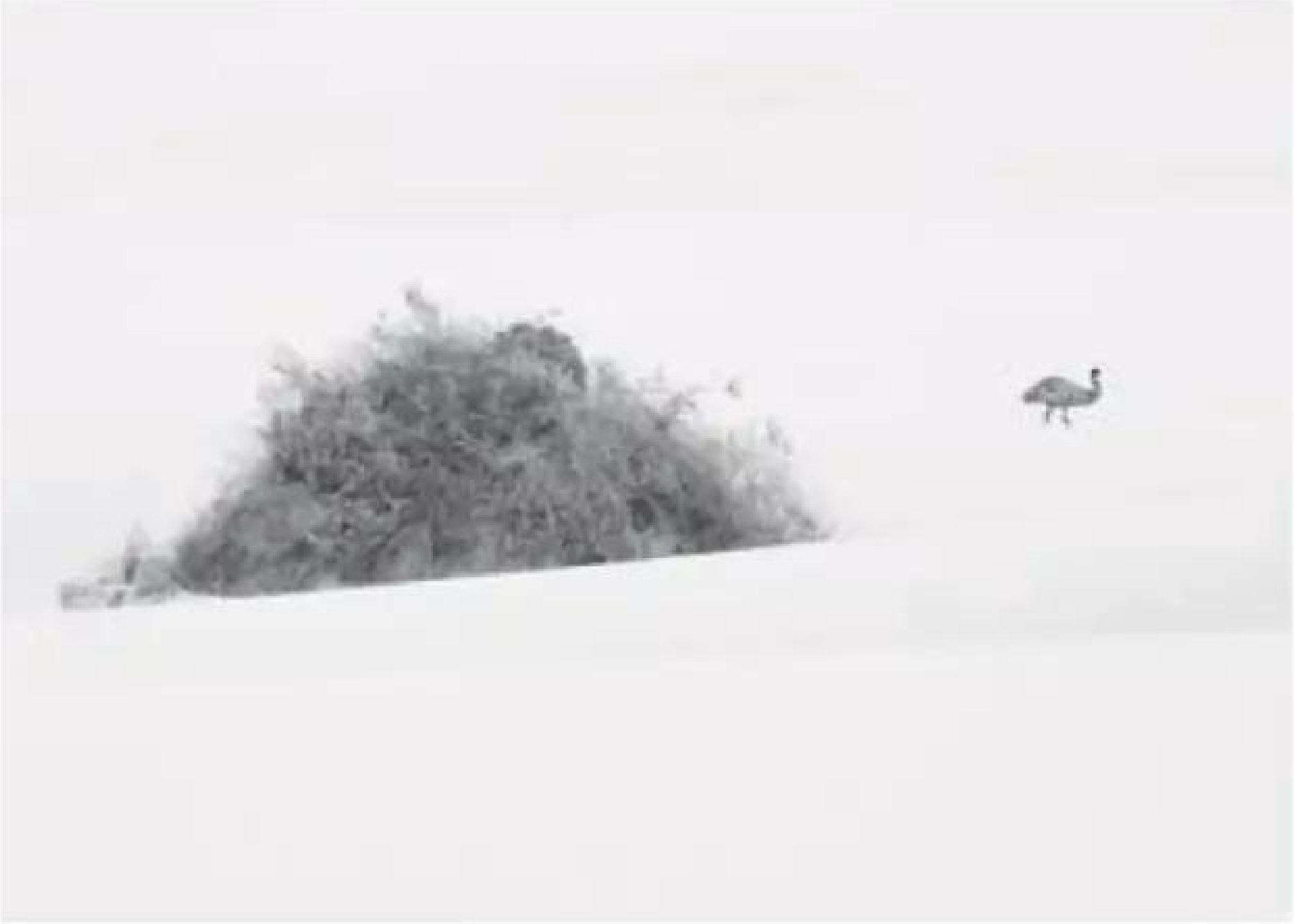


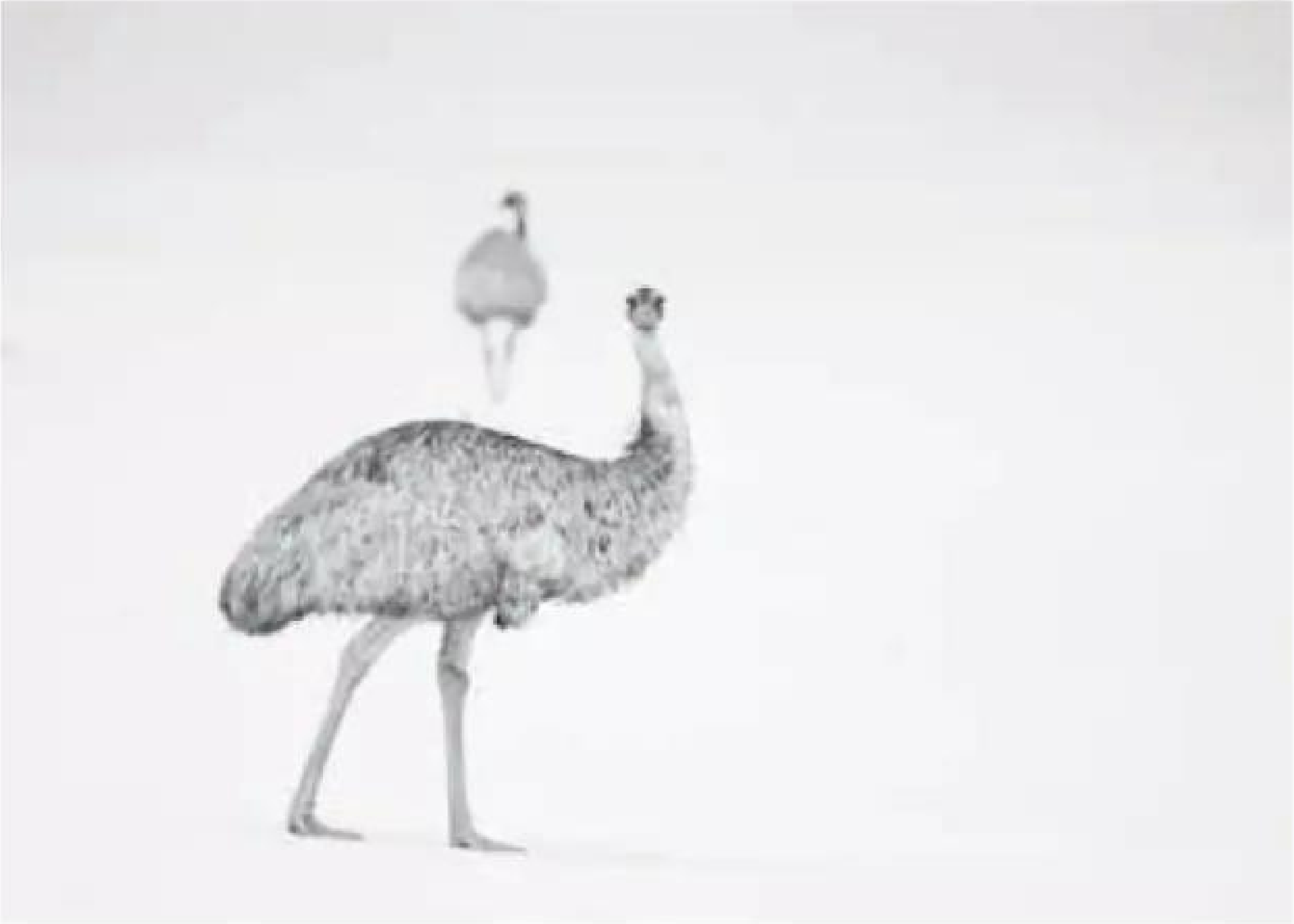
5. IAN CALLAGHAN

WANDERERS









6. KATIE ROBERTSON

CALLOUS MANICURE

7. WALTER BERGER

STORM AT BIHORO PASS

8. SHARRON SYKES

TREE EXPRESSIONS

BLACK & WHITE

9. DIANNE ENGLISH

FINE ART BOTANIC

10. WEIDONG BU

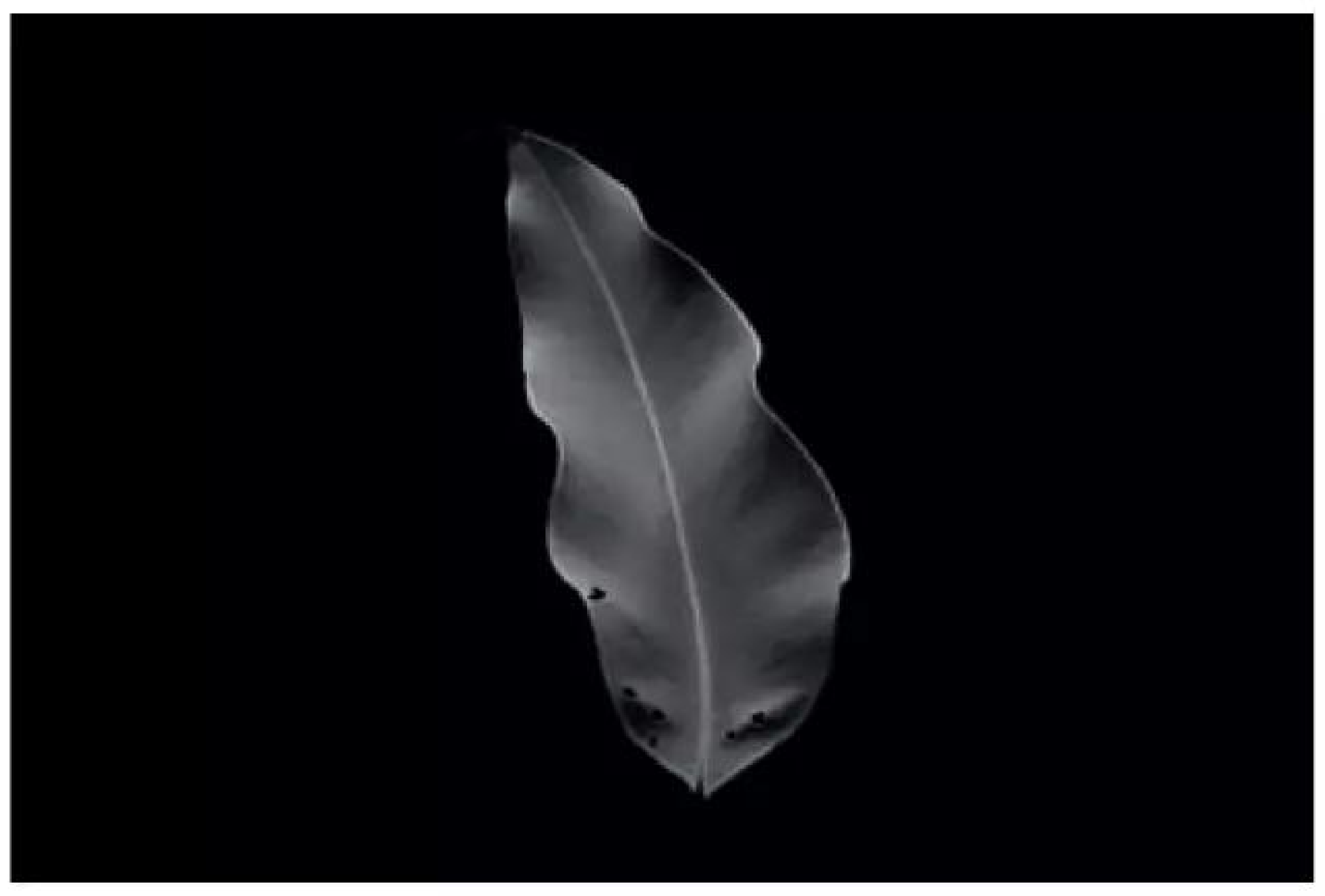
BLACK & WHITE @ LOFTEN

11. CRAIG FORD

IN THE EMBRACE OF FOG

12. JOSEPH MCCORMACK

STUDIO MACRO



13. MATTHEW TUFFIELD

ABBEY CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST LOUIS

14. NATHAN ACKLAND

WHEN FARMERS PROTEST

MINE
NO
MINE
MINE FREE
MALLEE FARMS
MINE FREE
MALLEE FARMS
FREE
FARMS

FINALISTS

BLACK & WHITE

PHOTOGRAPHER
OF THE YEAR 2025
PRESENTED BY Ted's cameras

15. GRAEME TRACEY

TARONGA ZOO

16. ANDREW SMALLMAN

ANGOPHORA

17. SOPHIE KOGOS

PURITY

18. ROWAN DEAR

THE GIANTS OF THE DEEP

19. DONALD CHIN

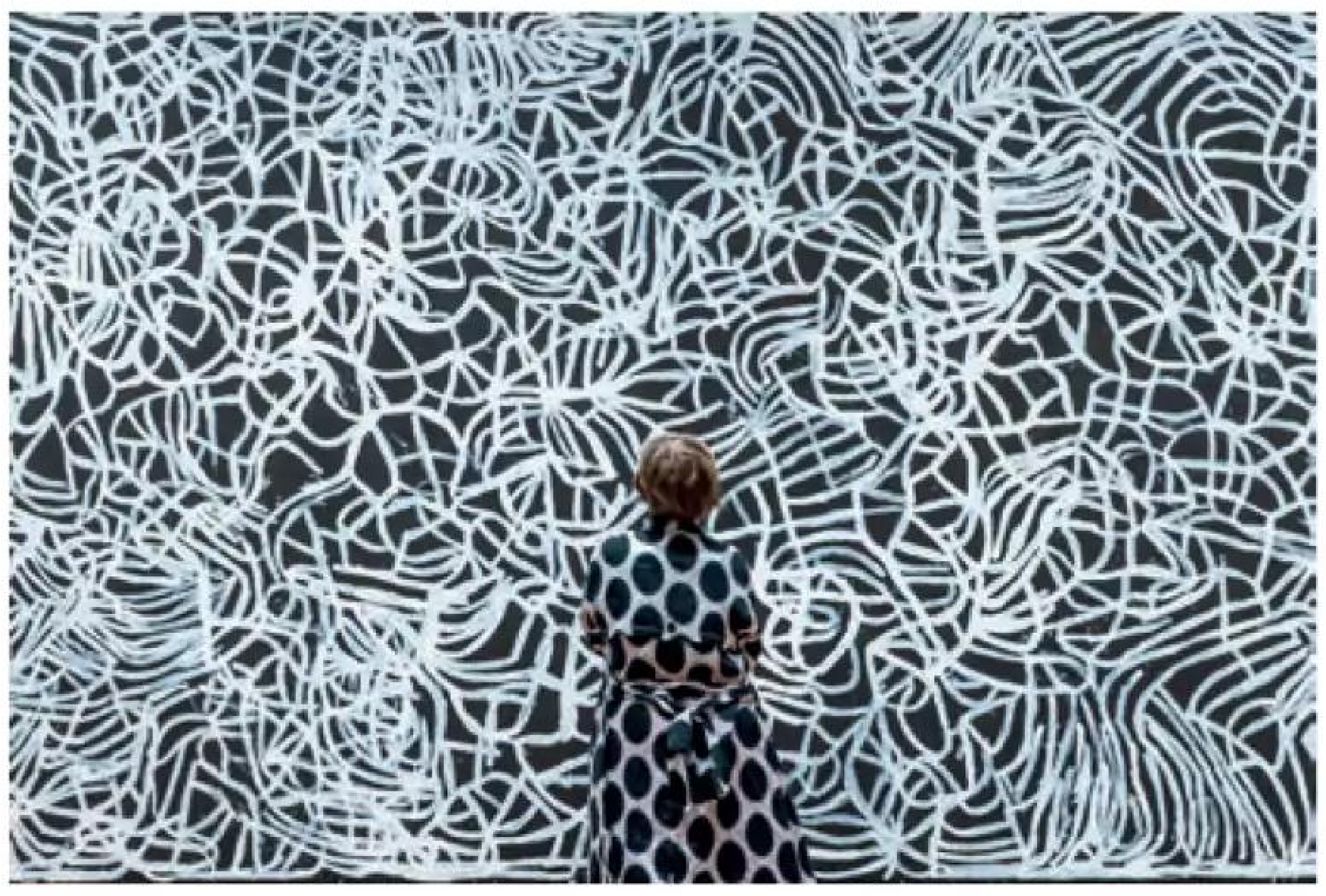
RHYTHMS OF DEVOTION

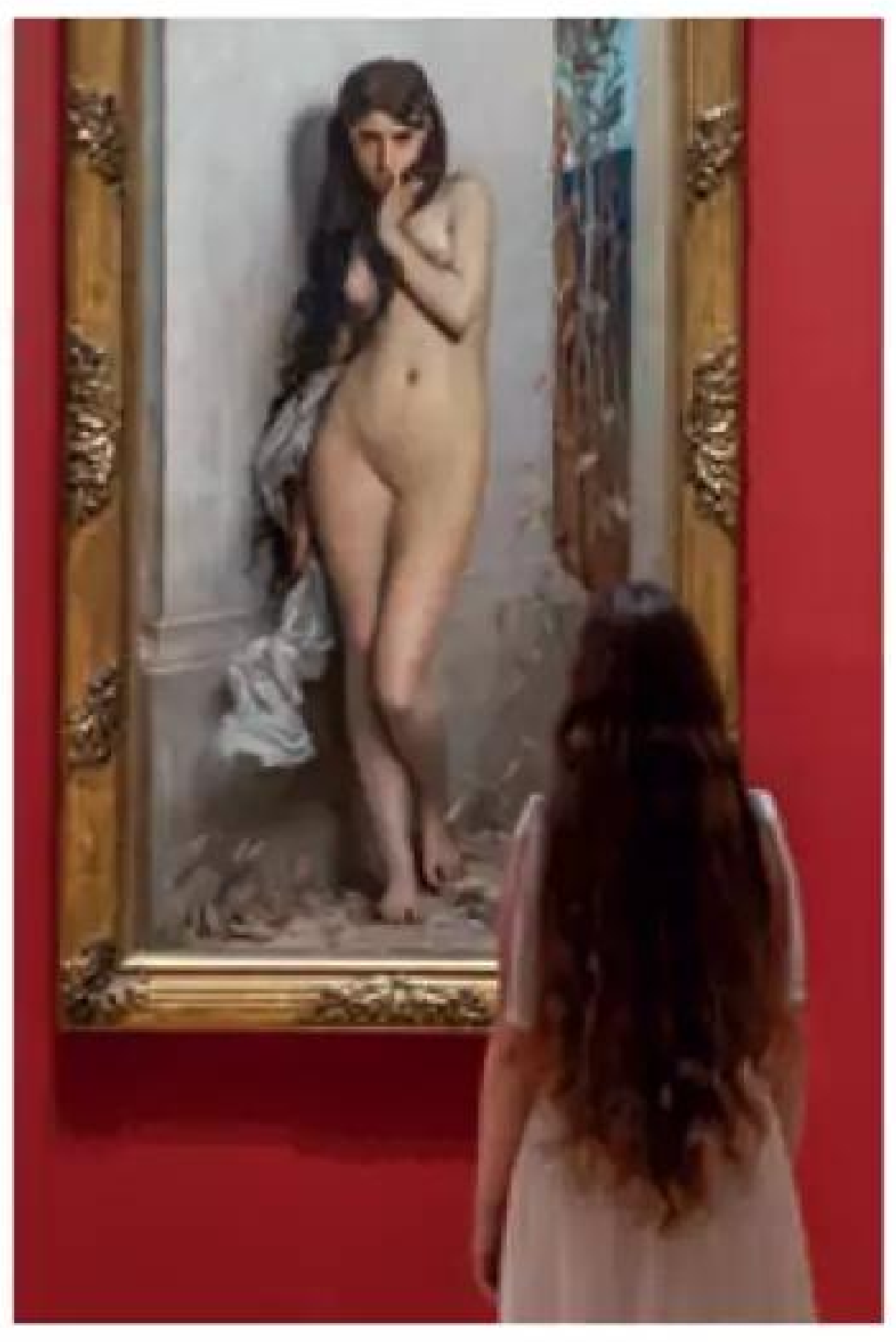
20. MANDY ERSKINE

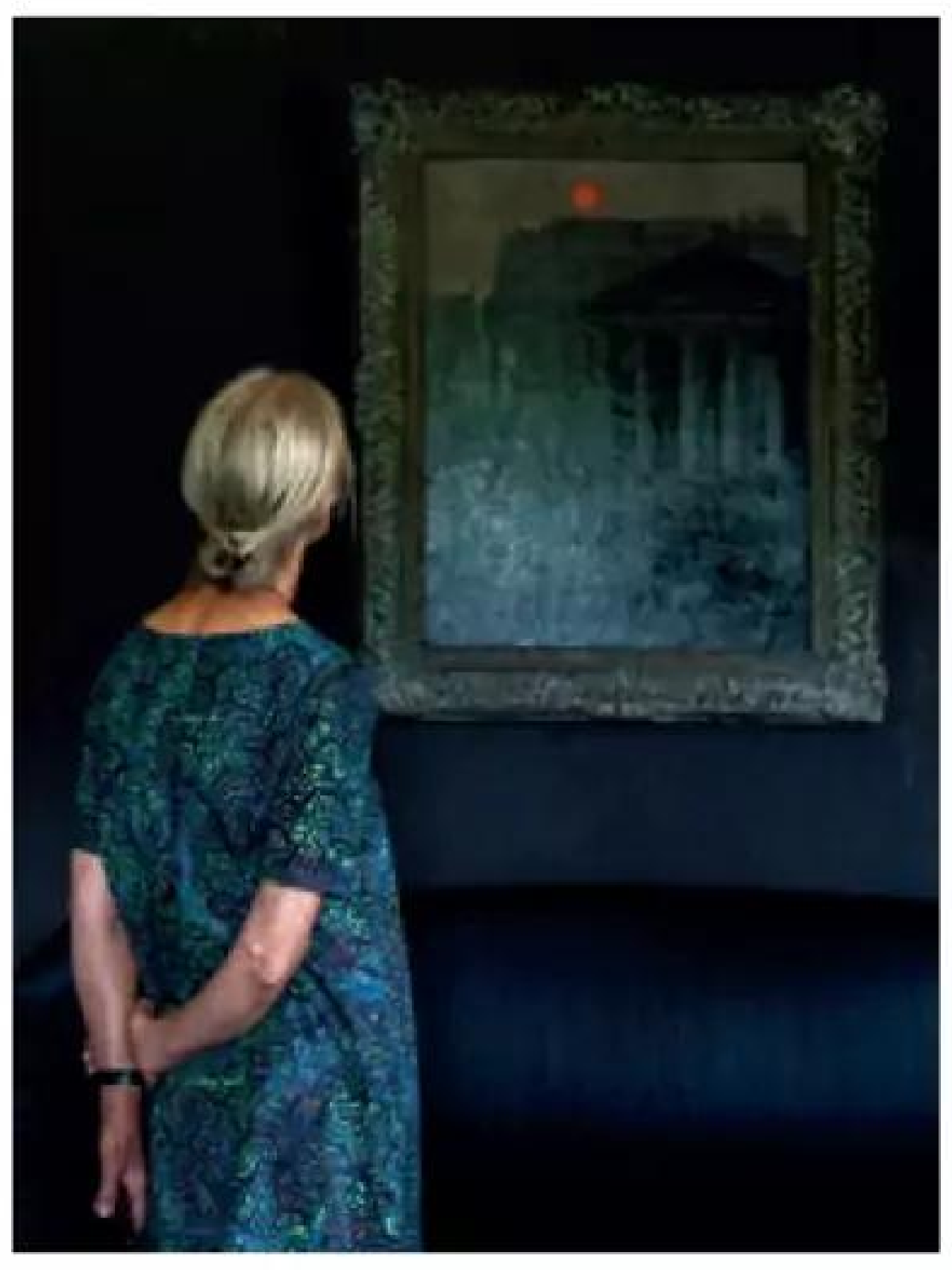
SYDNEY METRO

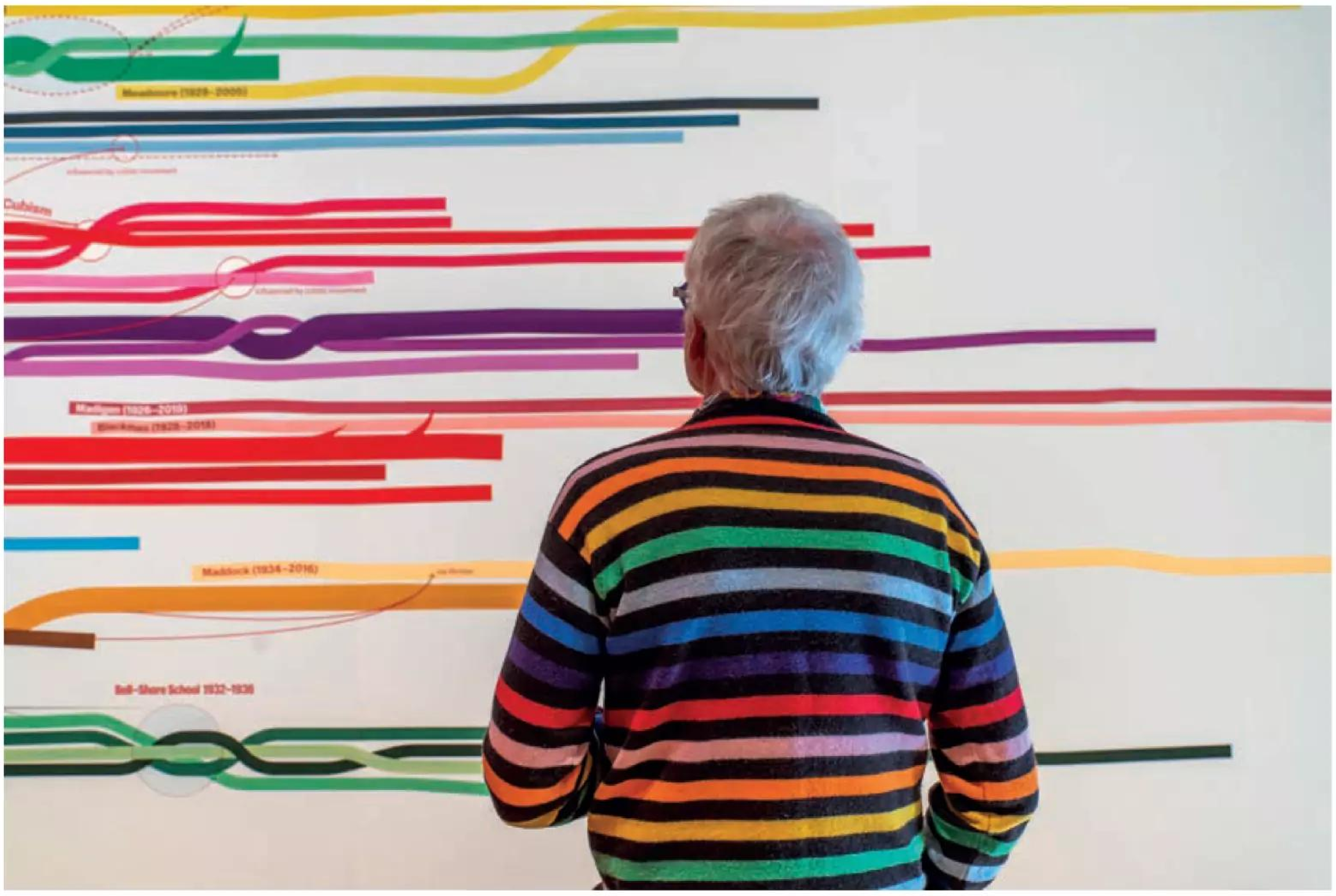
WINNER

TRAVEL









FIONA BOWRING

@fionabg_

ACCIDENTAL MIRRORS

CANBERRA-BASED photographer Fiona Bowring's quirky series *Accidental Mirrors* is the result of a bunch of visits to galleries in Australia and the UK. The series includes a self-portrait taken with the help of a gallery bench and a self-timer.

"Many travellers include art gallery visits in their holiday itineraries, and I do too," she says.

"Through accident or design, a surprising number of visitors end up mirroring the artworks they stop to admire. I can't resist exploring and capturing these matches. When I do, I introduce myself and share the results with my subjects. It's a lot of fun for me, and they enjoy it too!"

For our judges, this unique series demonstrated how diverse the Travel category can be and showed that a simple idea, combined with patience, can deliver great results.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

LISA MICHELE BURNS: These images made me want to peer closer into the frame and are such a clever use of observation, composition, and creative thought. While beautifully simple, the images have a layered complexity and make you feel as if you're in the gallery, viewing it through the photographer's eyes as they survey the room for suitable subjects to align with the artwork.

DREW HOPPER: Fiona's playful and beautifully observed series turns gallery-goers into part of the artwork itself. With sharp colour instincts and thoughtful composition, she captures those delightful moments where people and paintings collide in unexpected harmony. It's a witty, sophisticated reminder that in every gallery, the observers become part of the story too.

PRIZE: $1,000 cash, a Professional Photo Consultation with Sally Brownbill from The Brownbill Effect valued at $440, a Photobookshop HD layflat photobook valued at $289, plus three Retouch4Me photo retouching apps.

RUNNER-UP
TRAVEL

ADITYA JOSHI

ECHOES OF THE ETERNAL: RITUAL, RIVER, AND THE CITY

ADITYA Joshi is an Indian-Australian photographer based in Brisbane. He says his academic background in engineering has helped him develop a precise understanding of light, colour, and composition, which is evident in his striking Travel category runner-up series, *Echoes of the Eternal.*

"After living abroad for over a decade, this series began as a journey through three cities in India – Varanasi, Kolkata, and the temporary city of Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj – but it quickly became something more," he says.

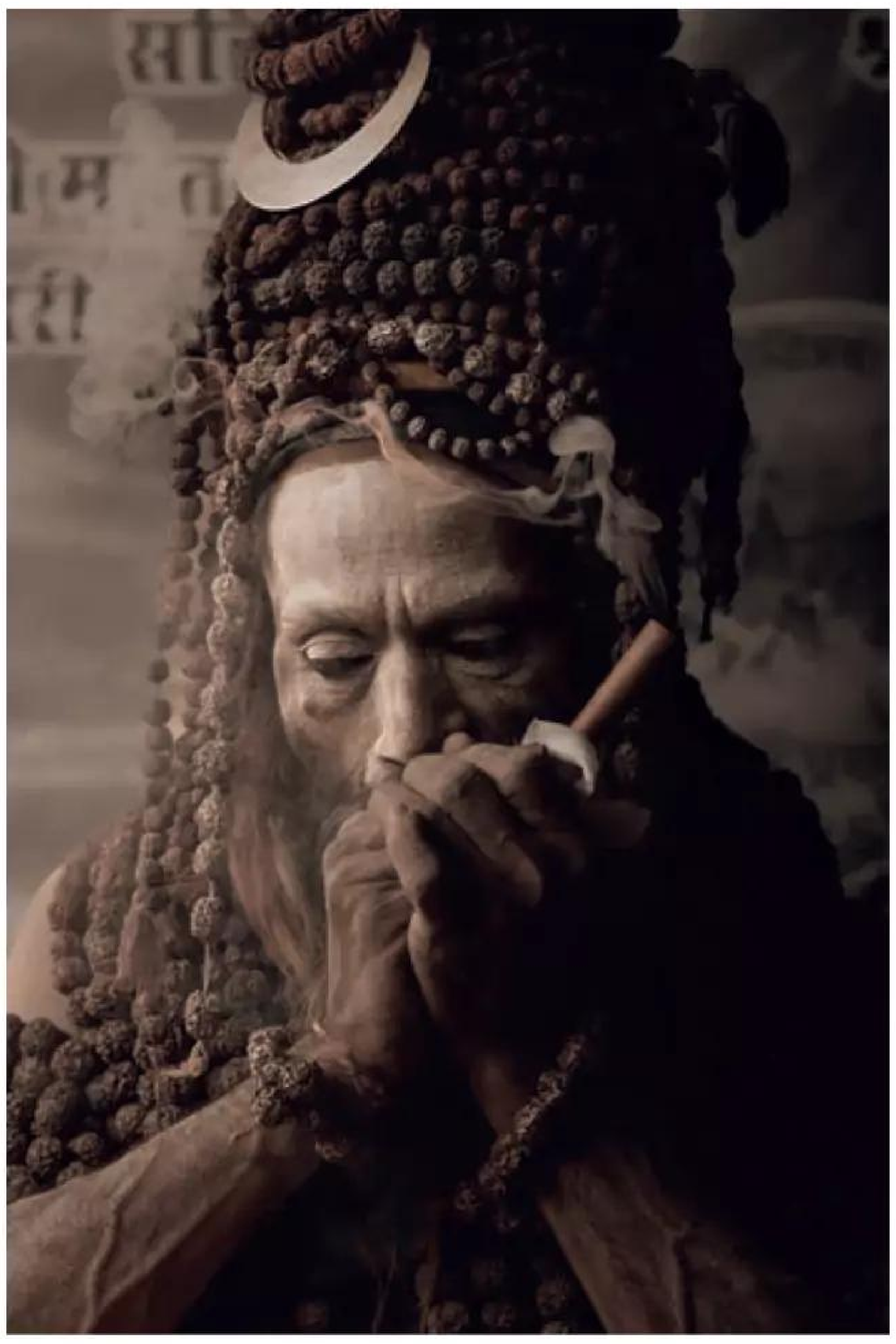
"I tried to capture the sensory intensity of moving through the streets: colour appearing without warning, faces that emerge and vanish, moments that arrive too quickly to fully grasp. Each image is a fragment – a brief collision of movement, light, and human presence."

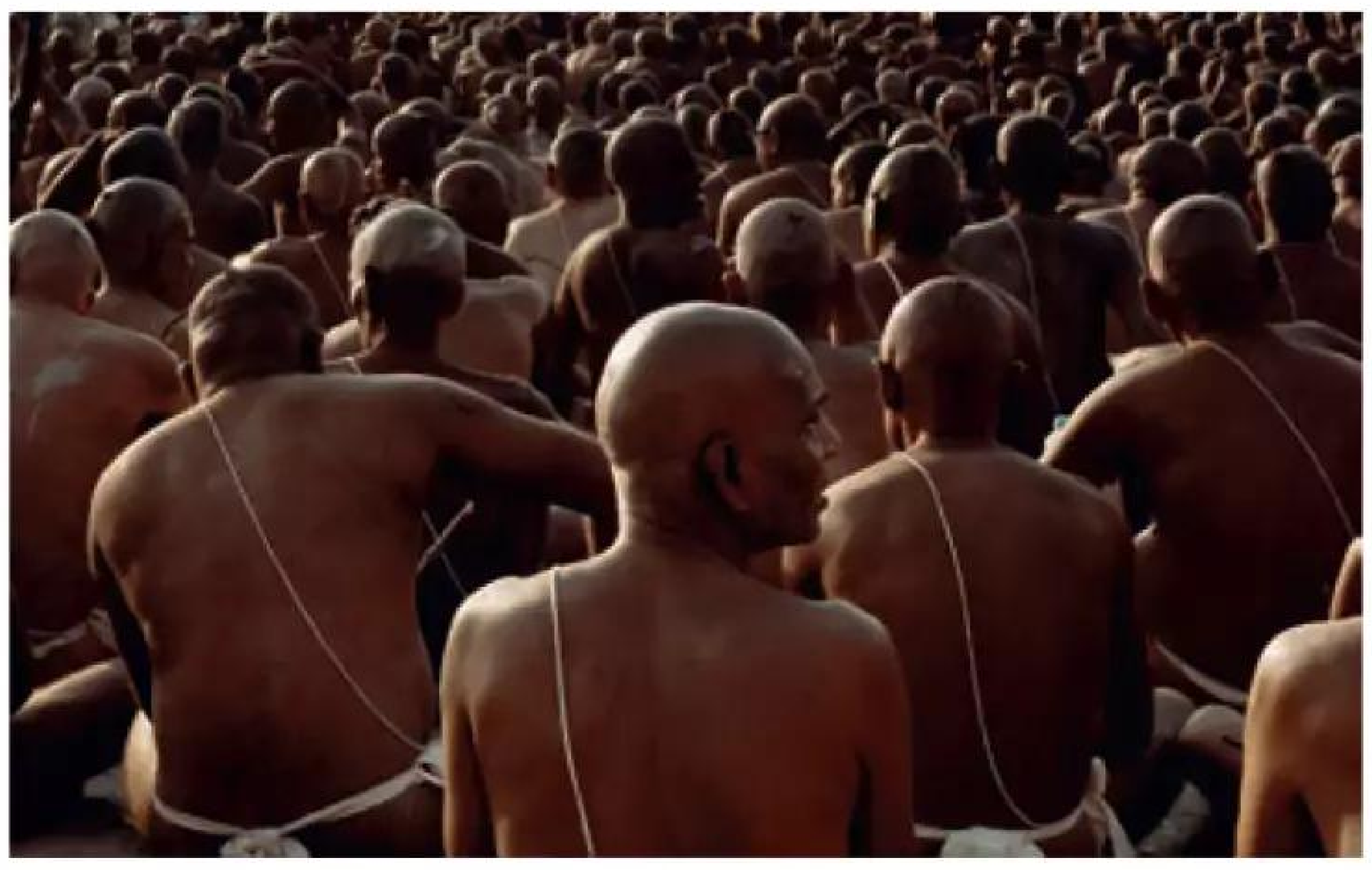
WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

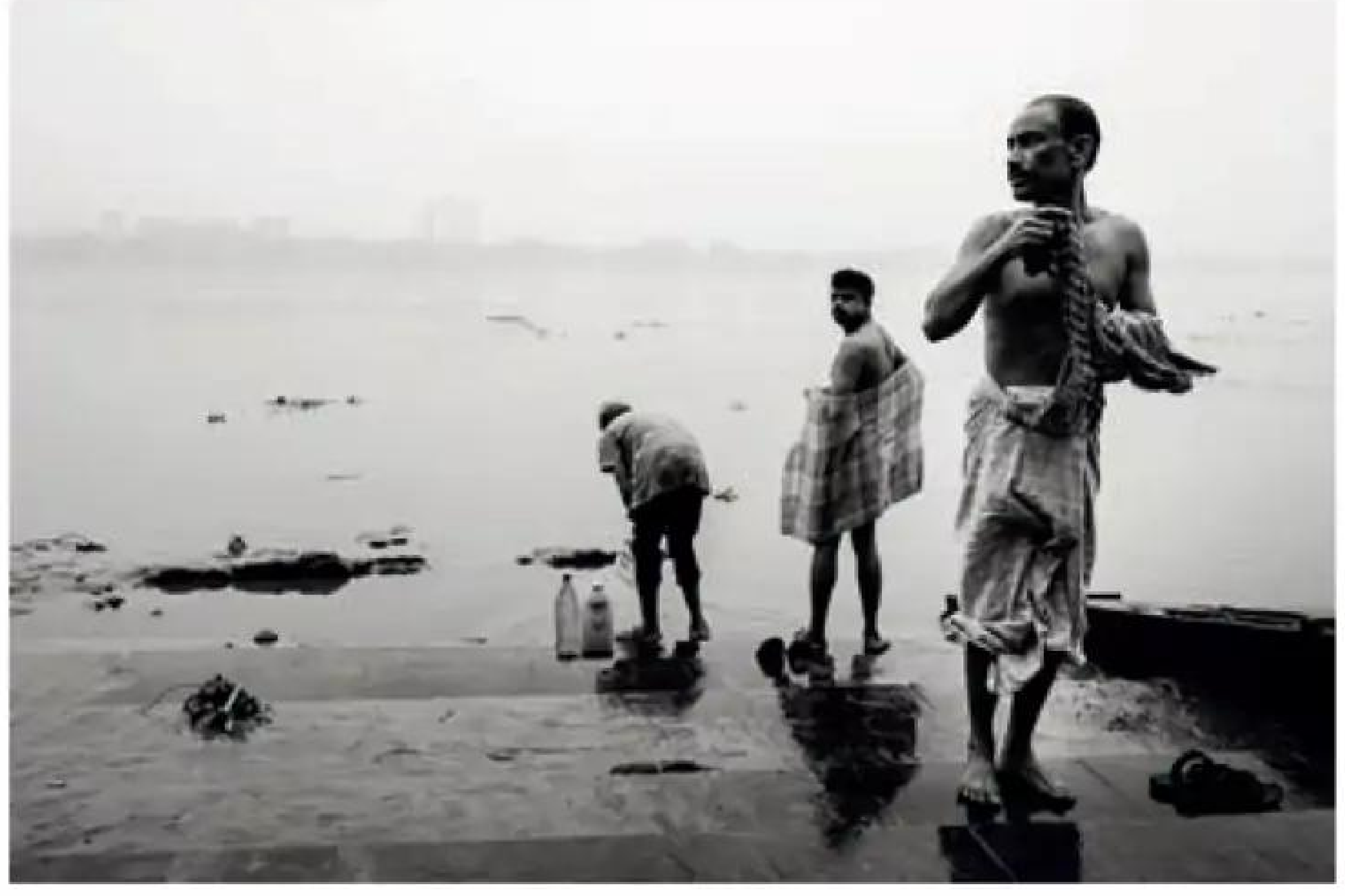
LISA MICHELE BURNS: The use of pattern, shape and framing, not to mention the subtle aspects of movement and mood, makes this such a moving and immersive series that offers an intimate glimpse into these sacred spiritual rituals. I kept returning to this portfolio to delve deeper. As a series, it aligns to tell a story that you feel privileged to witness.

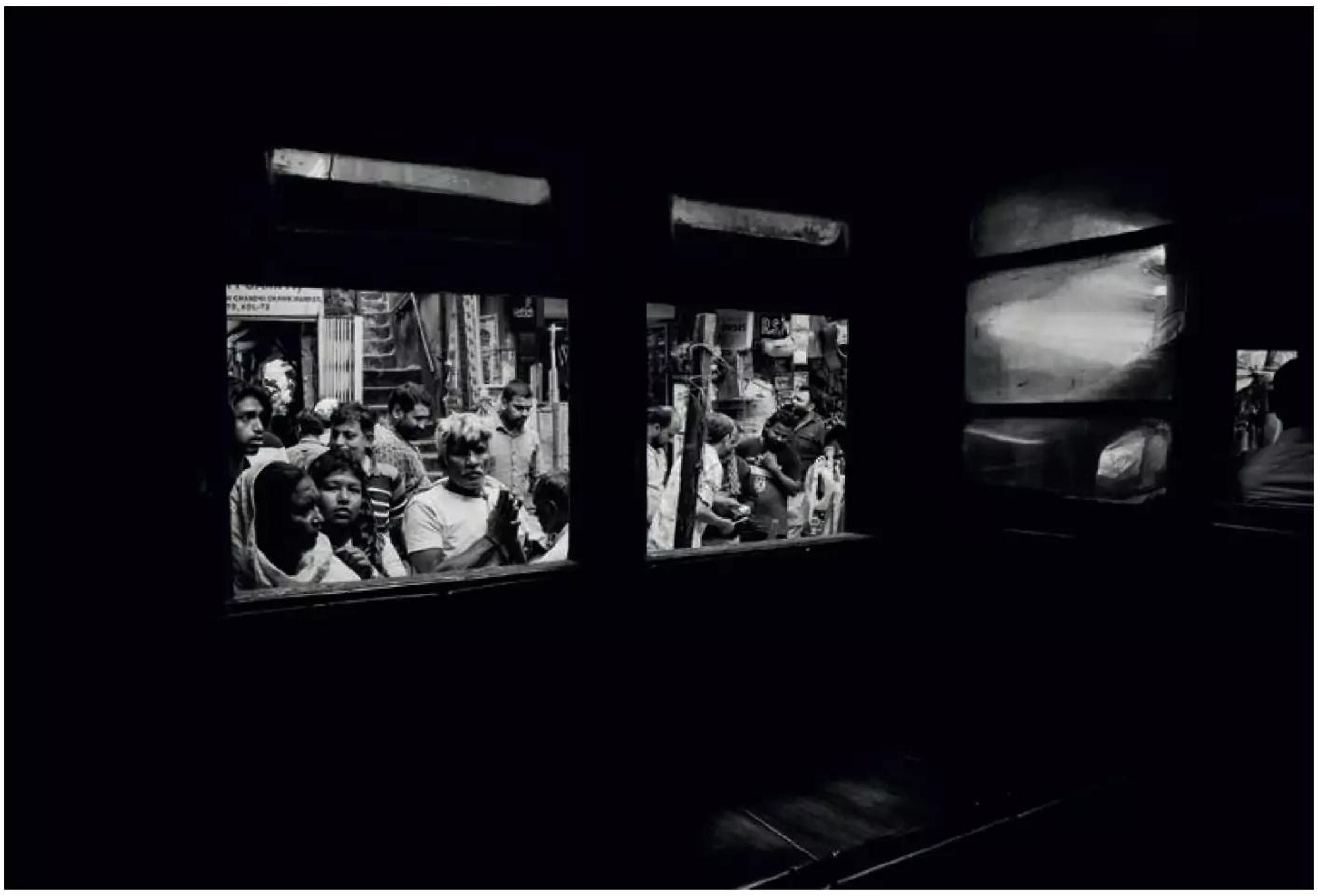
DREW HOPPER: Here, the warm, earthy tones of the colour images contrast beautifully with the moody monochrome, creating a quietly powerful and timeless rhythm. Though India is often photographed to cliché, Aditya's thoughtful processing brings a rare freshness to these familiar scenes.

PRIZE: $200 Ted's Cameras voucher.



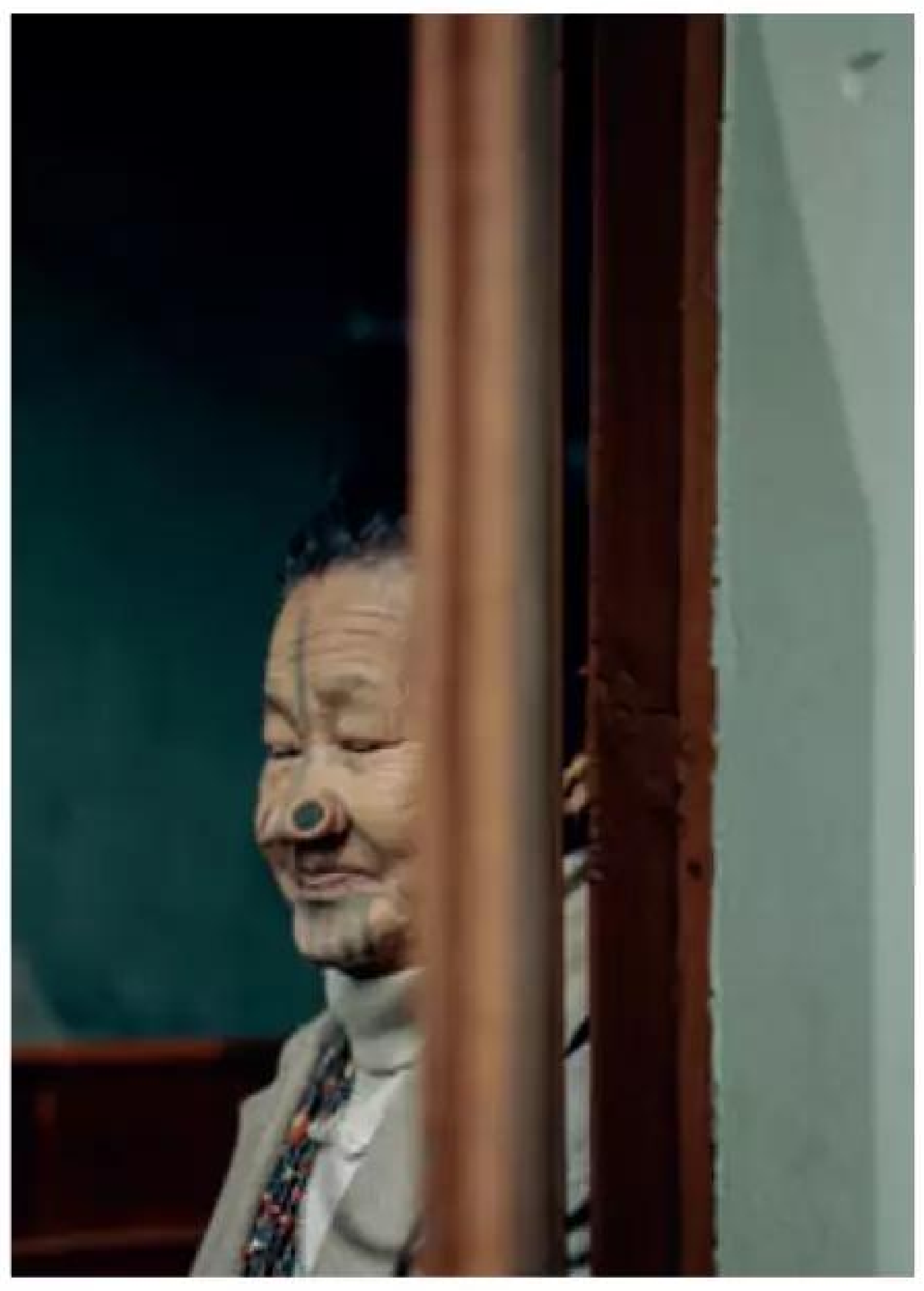


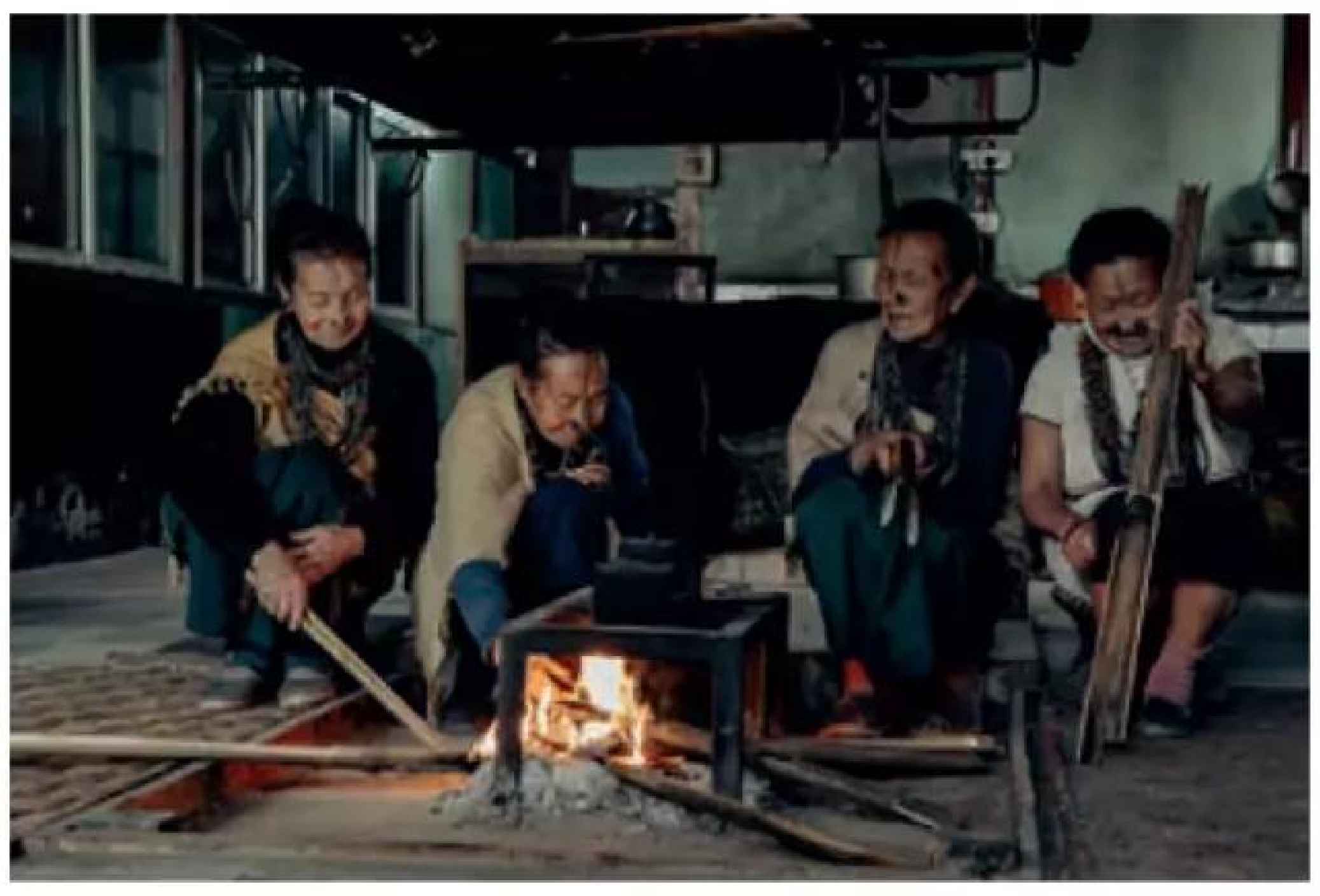


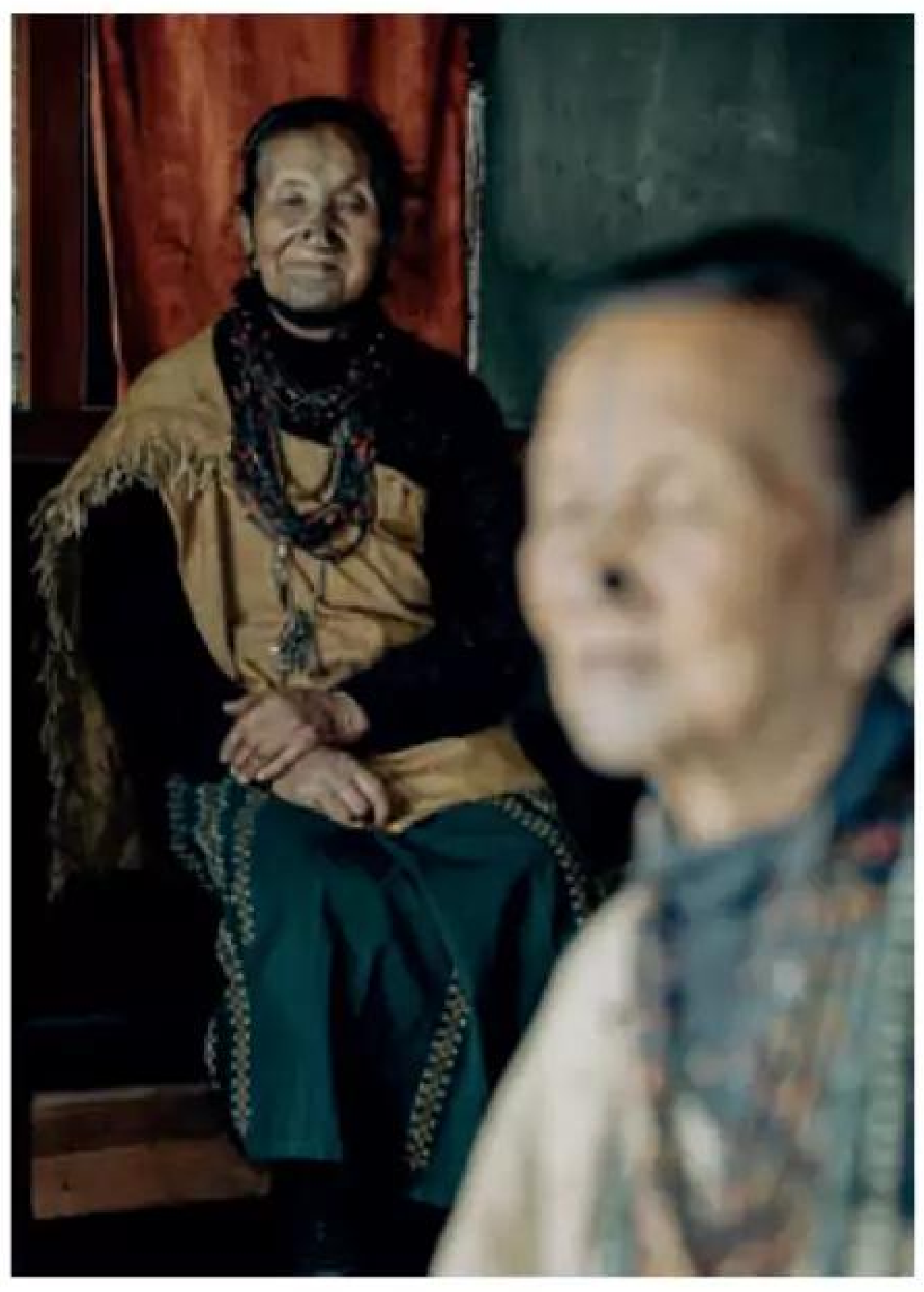


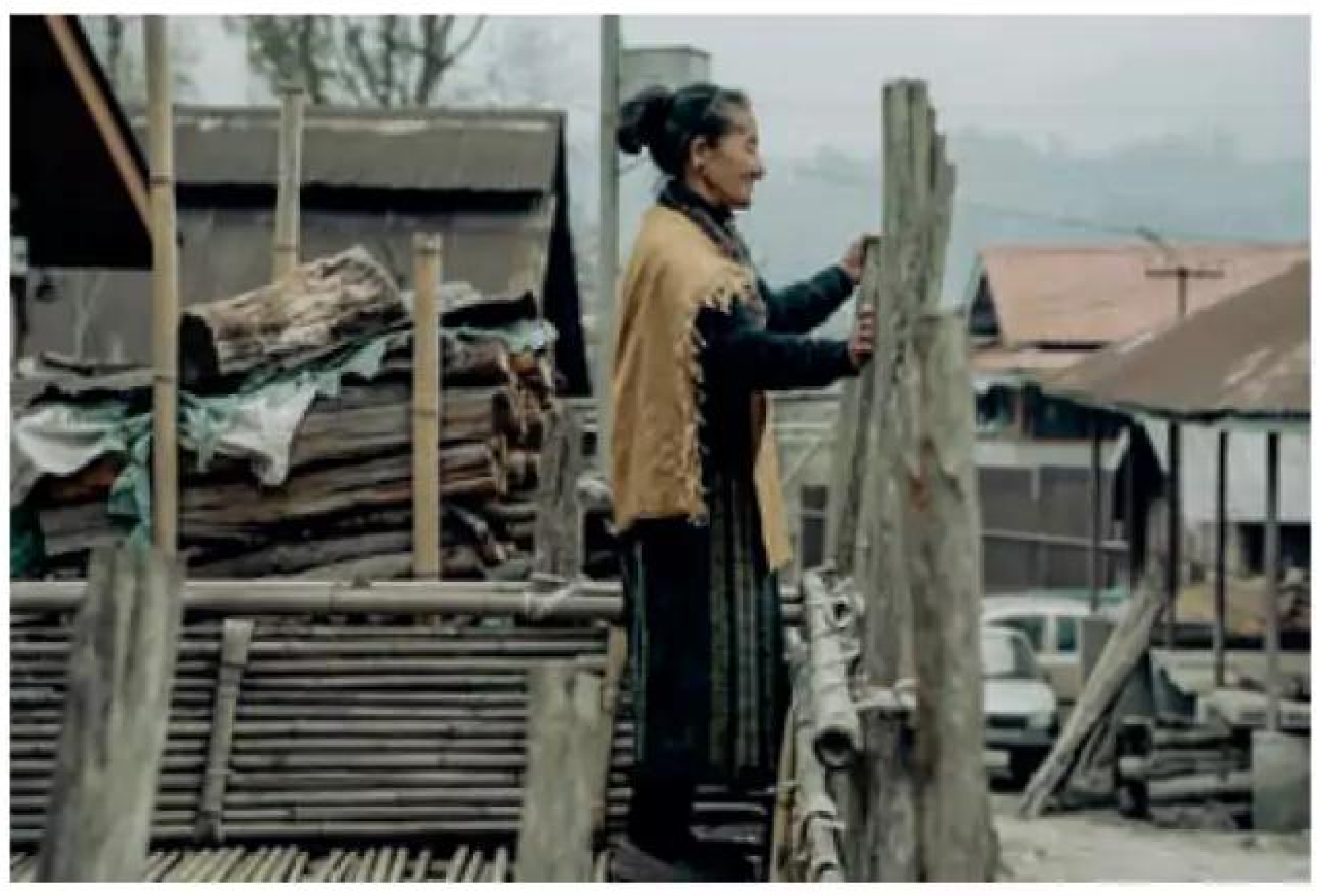
3. CARL NEHORE

APATANI WOMEN



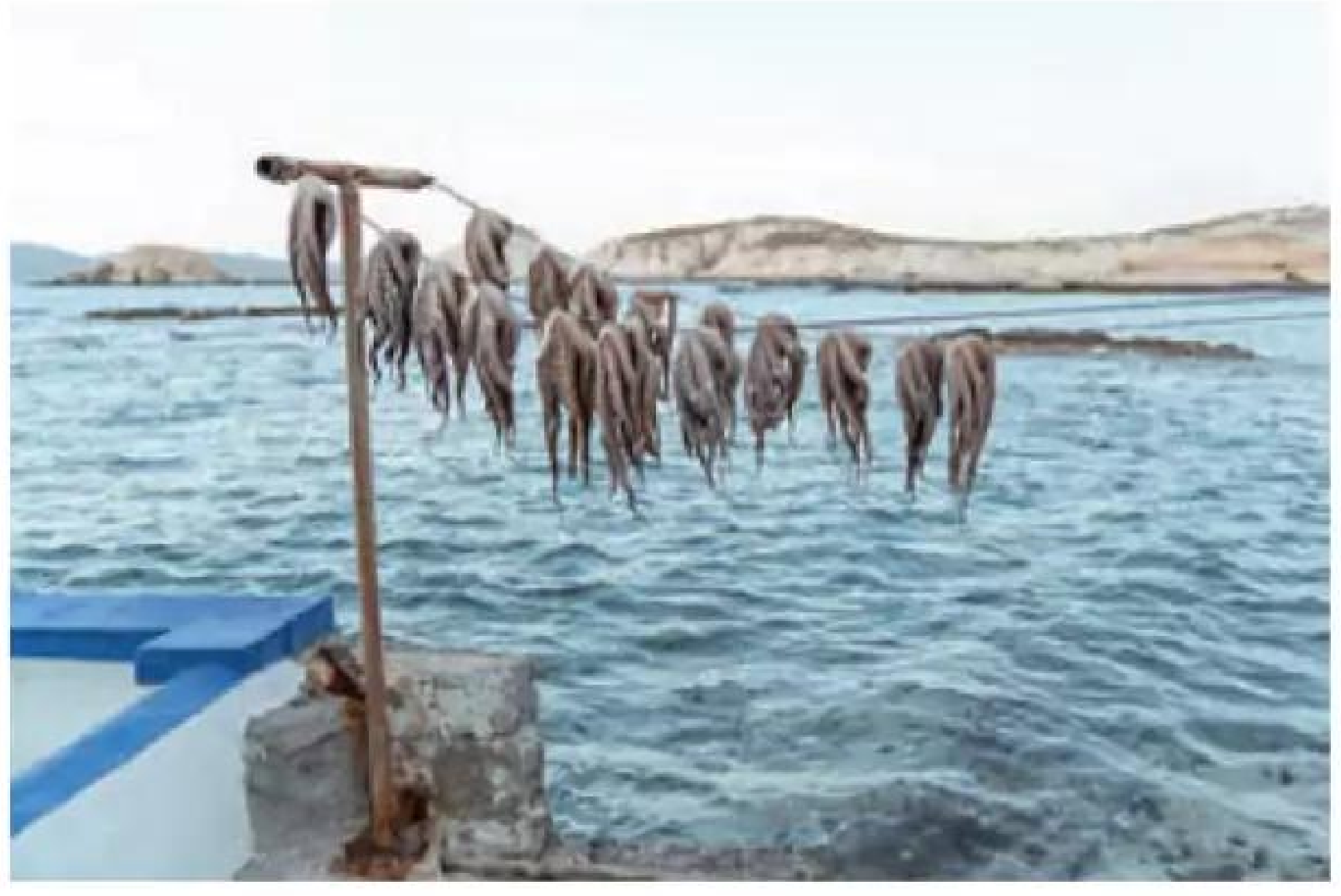


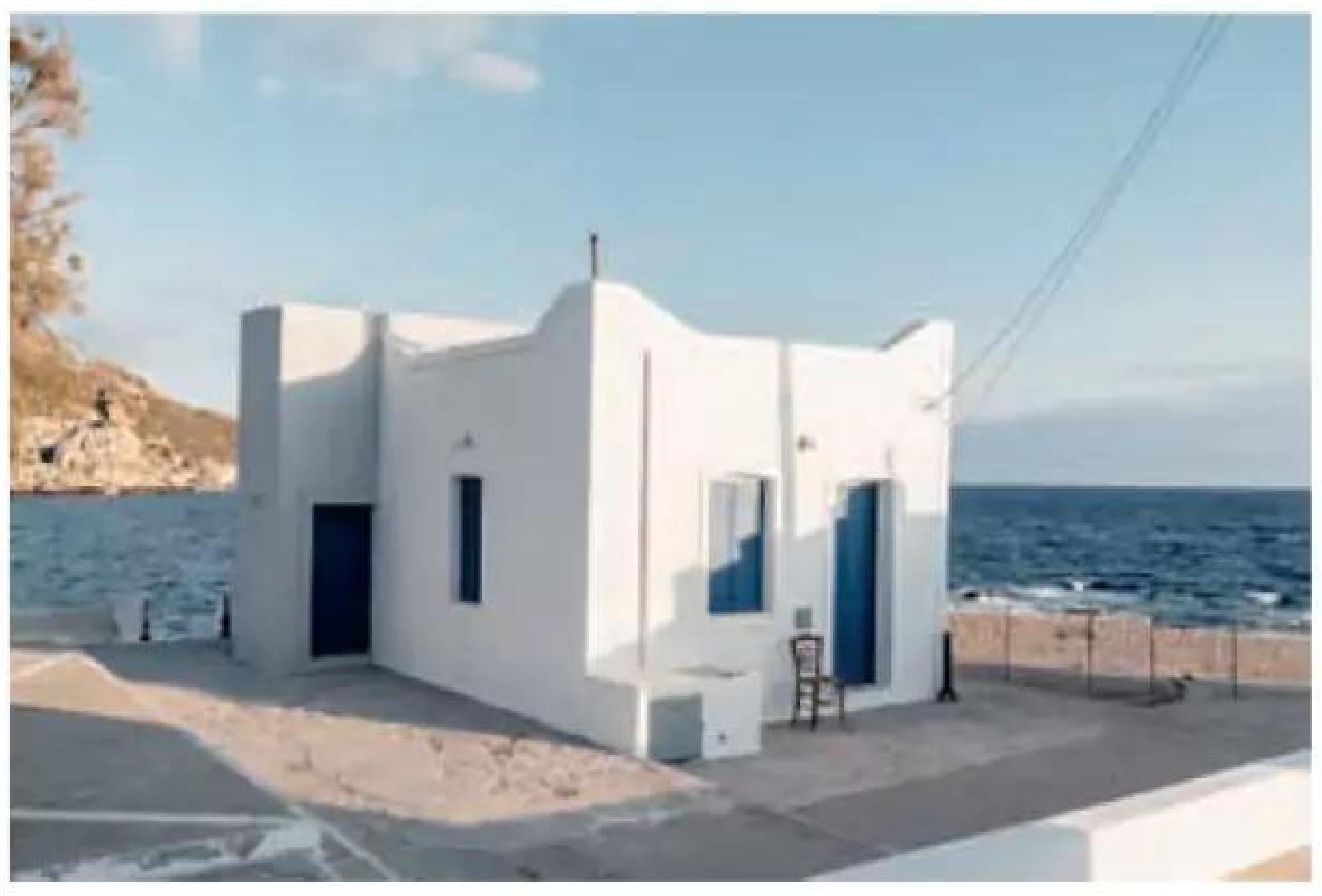


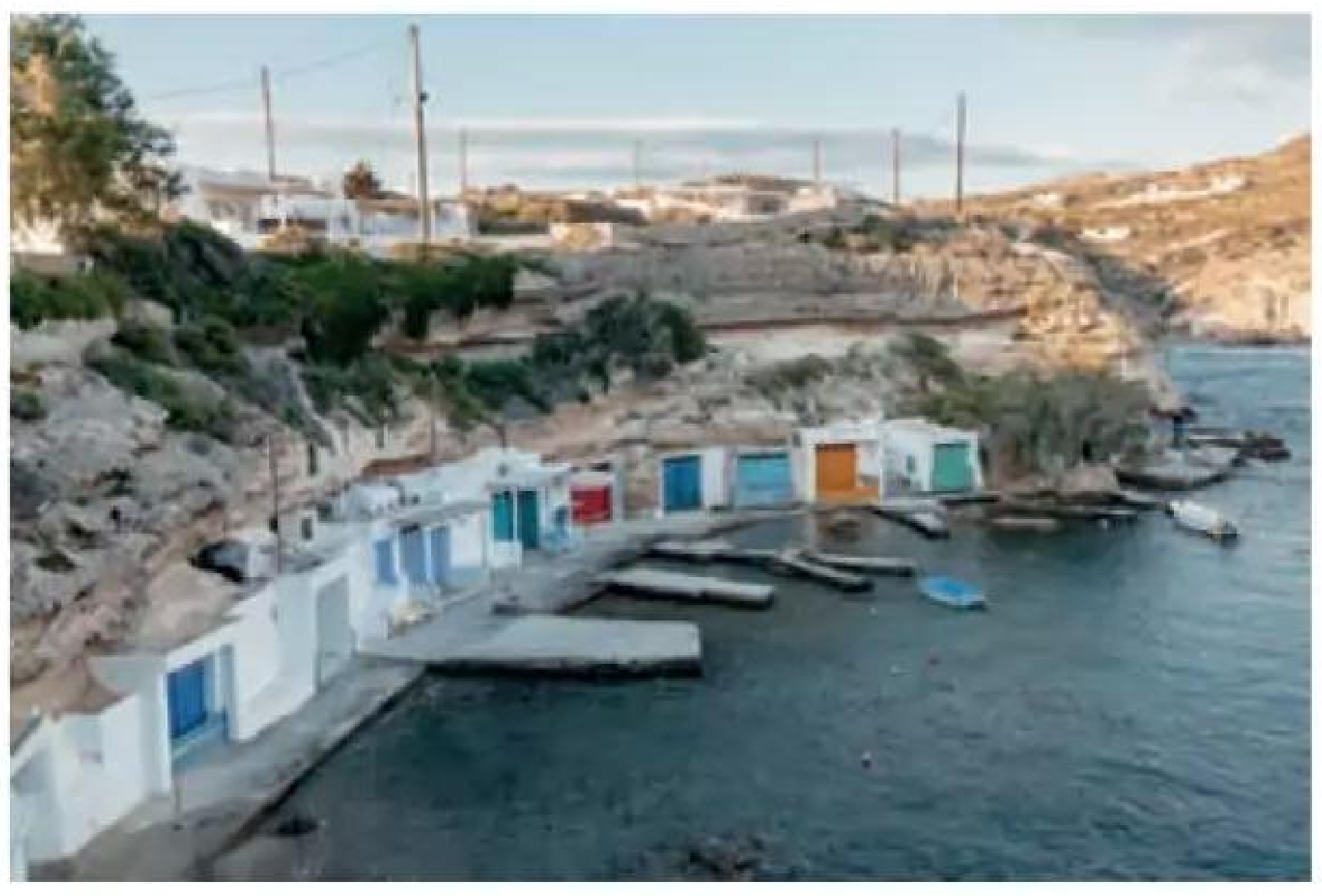


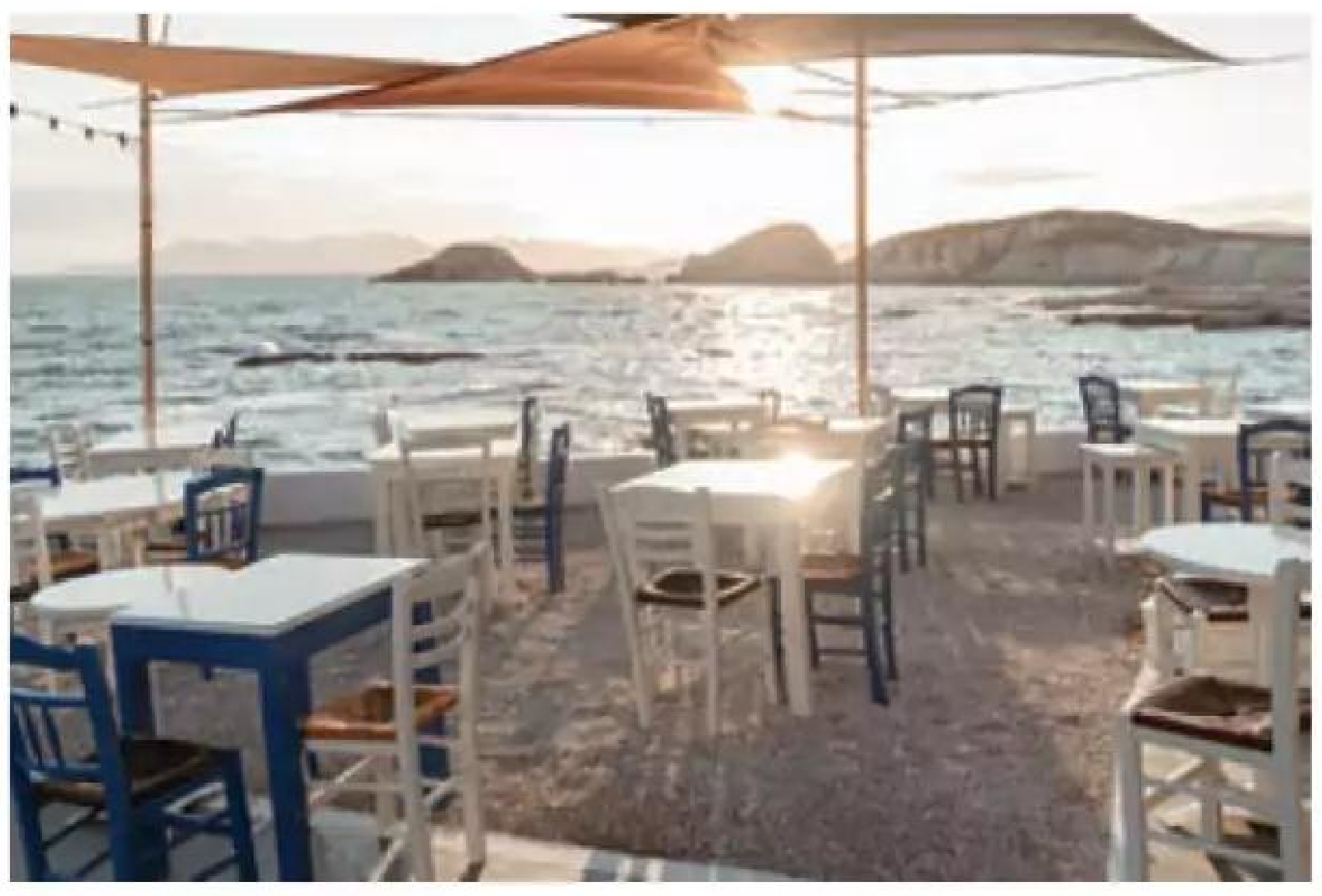
4. DANIELLE SAMMONS

A FISHING VILLAGE AT SUNRISE



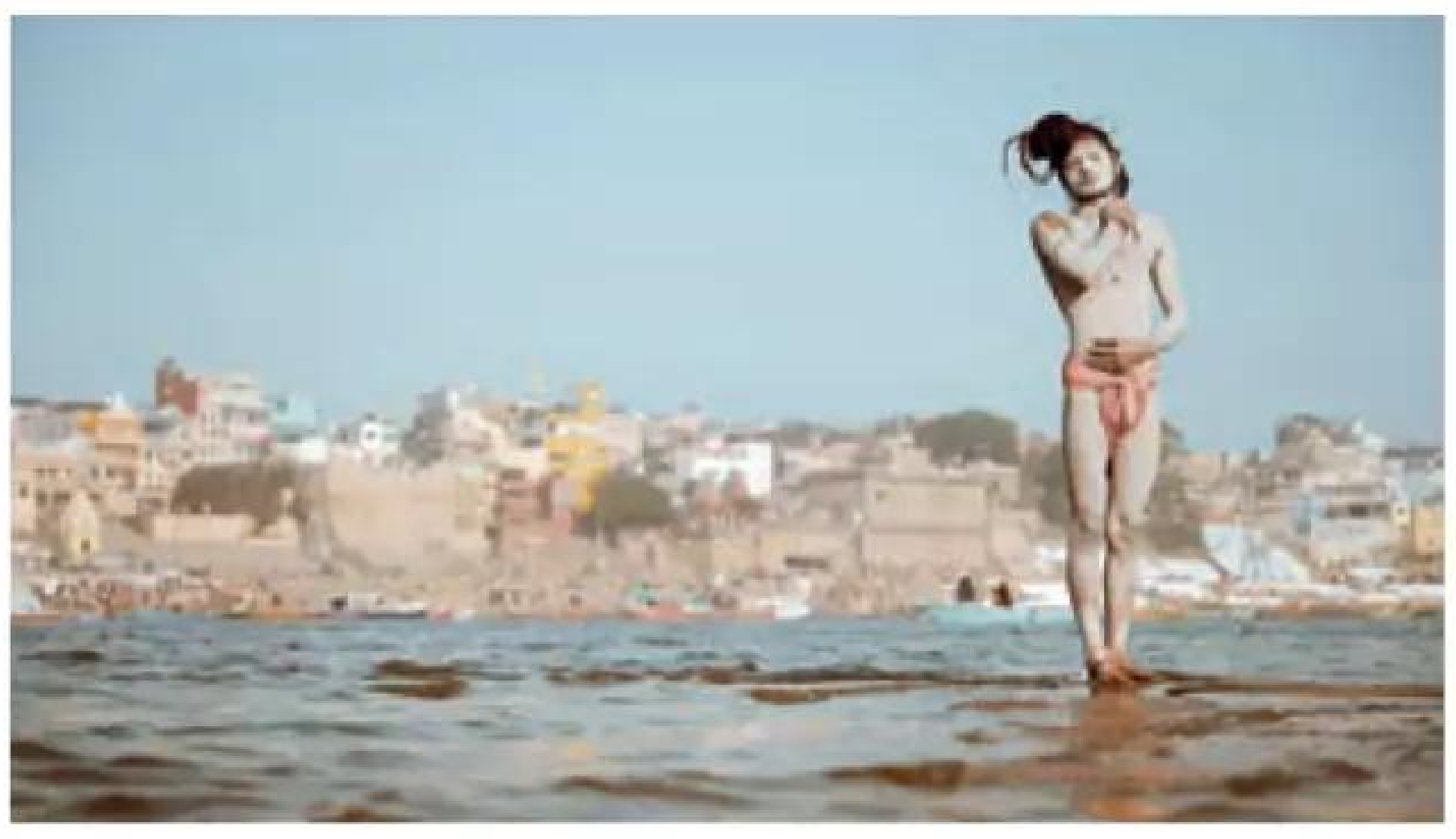


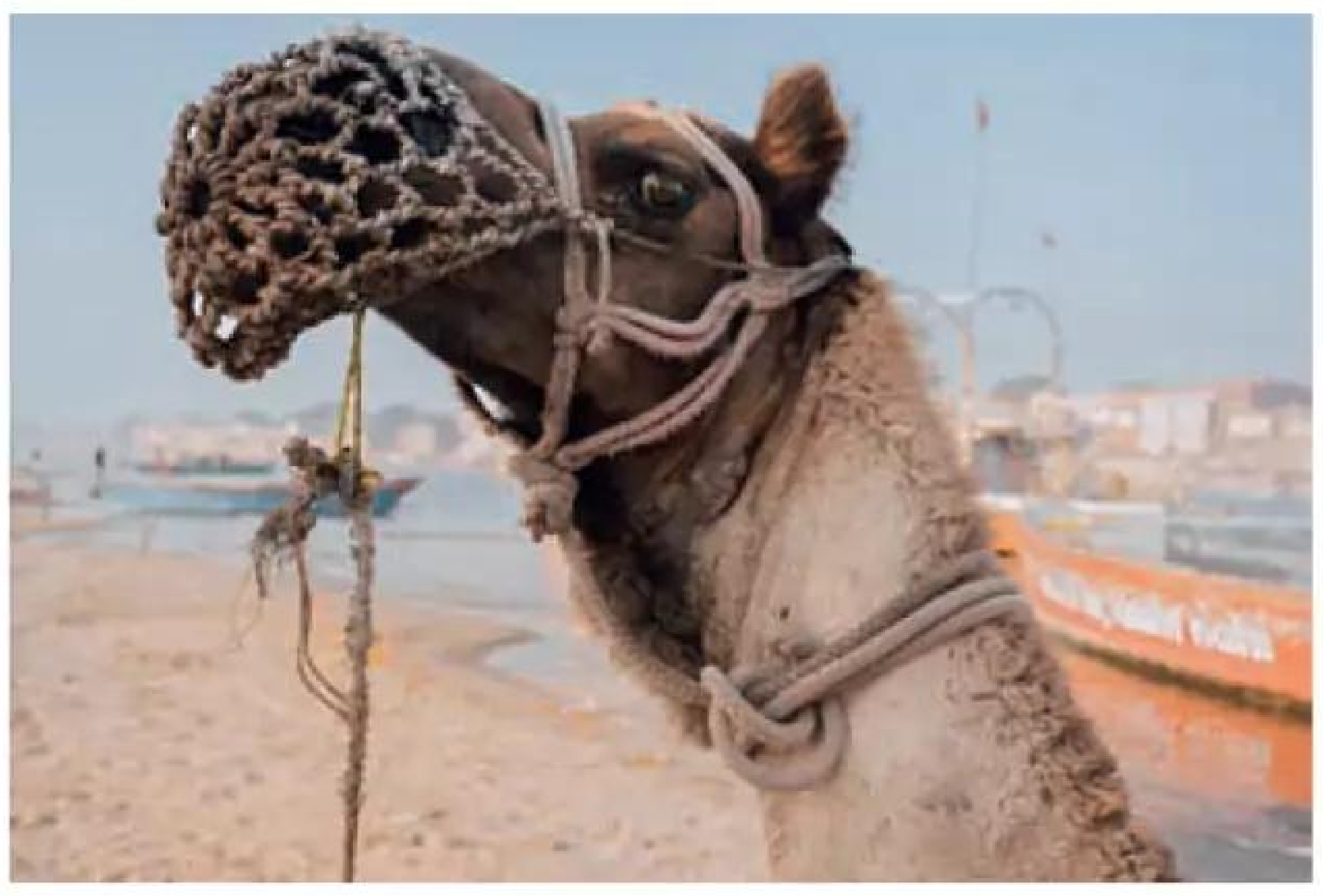


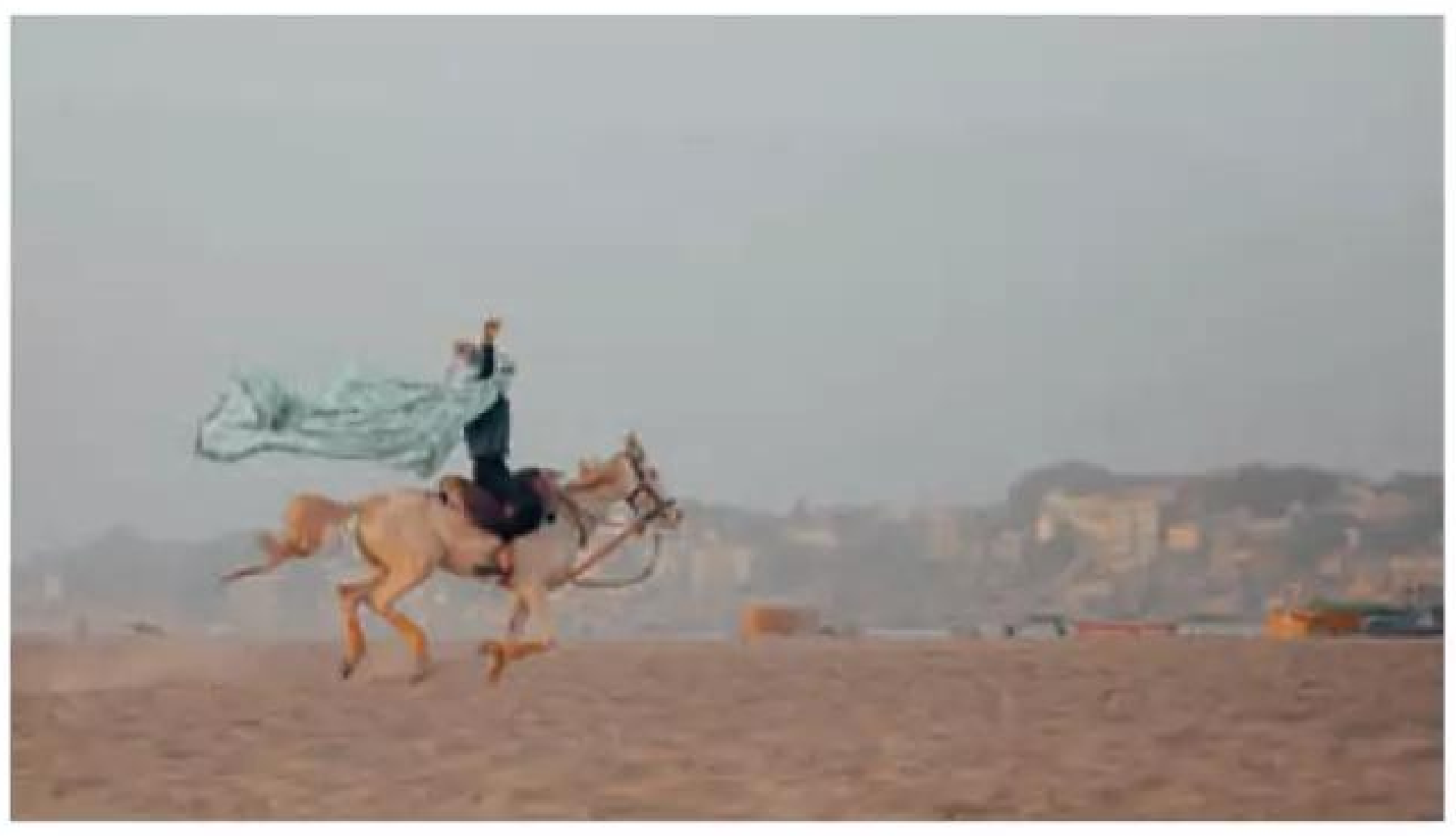


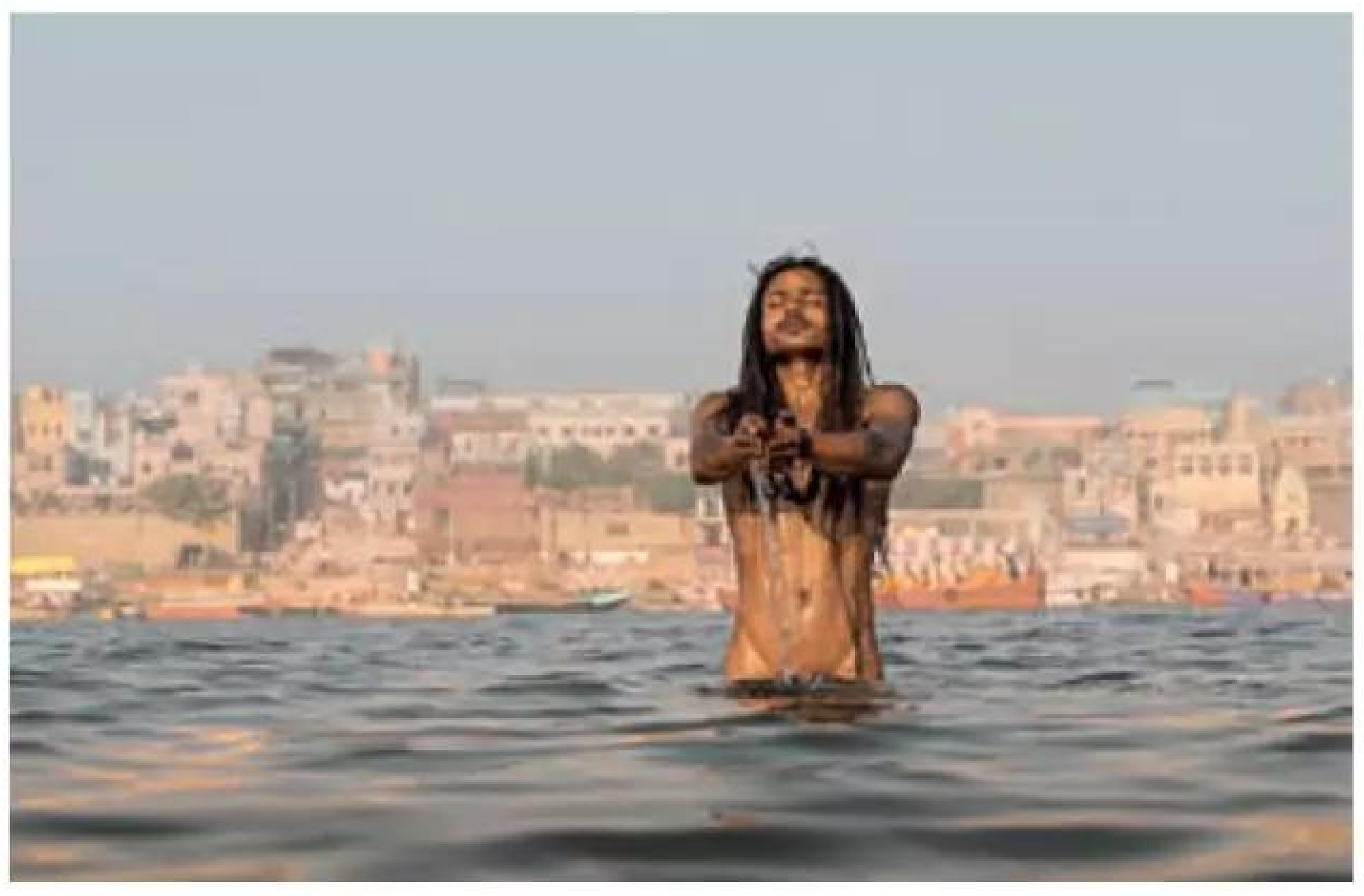
5. KRISTYN TAYLOR

EARLY MORNING ACROSS THE GANGA, VARANASI



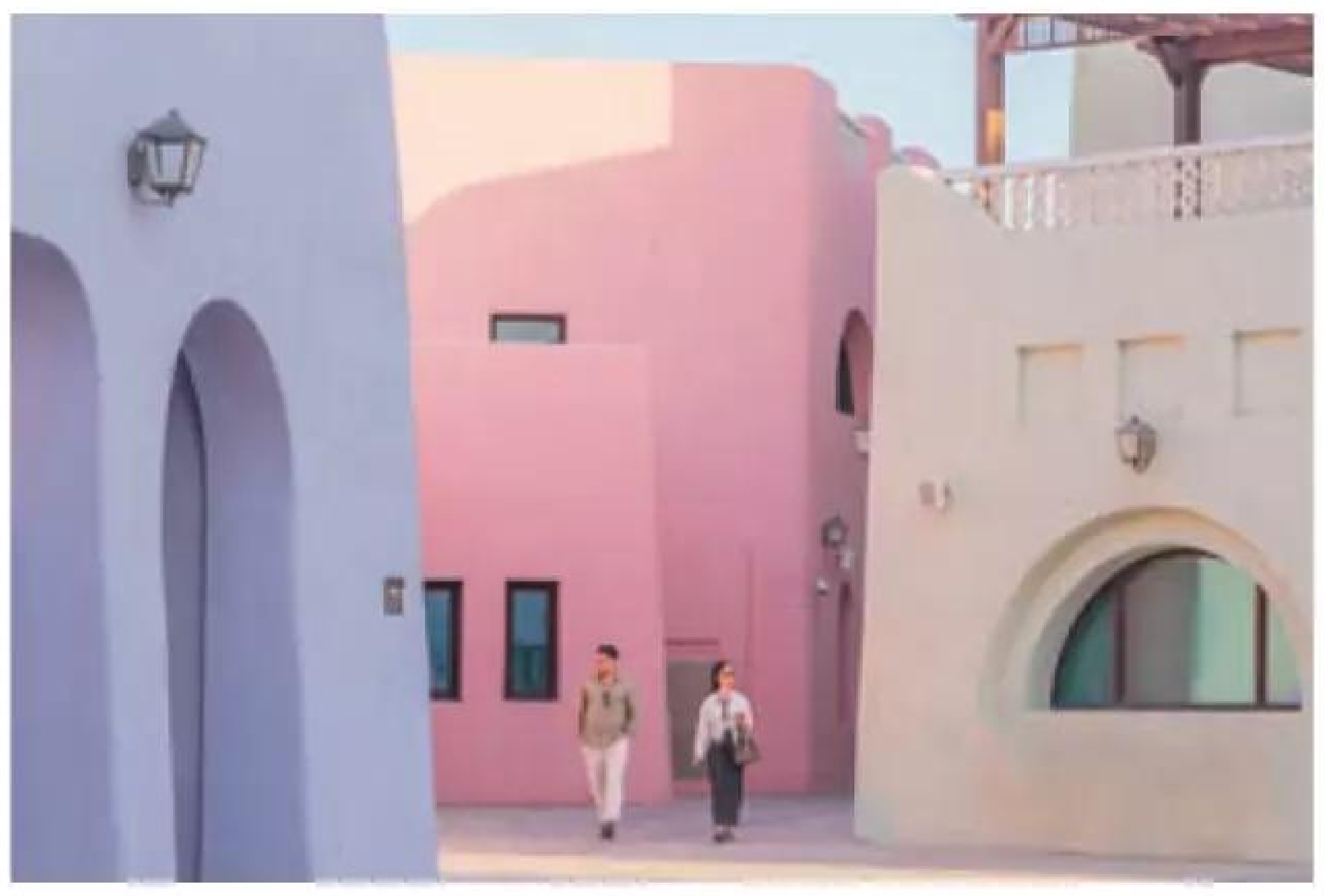


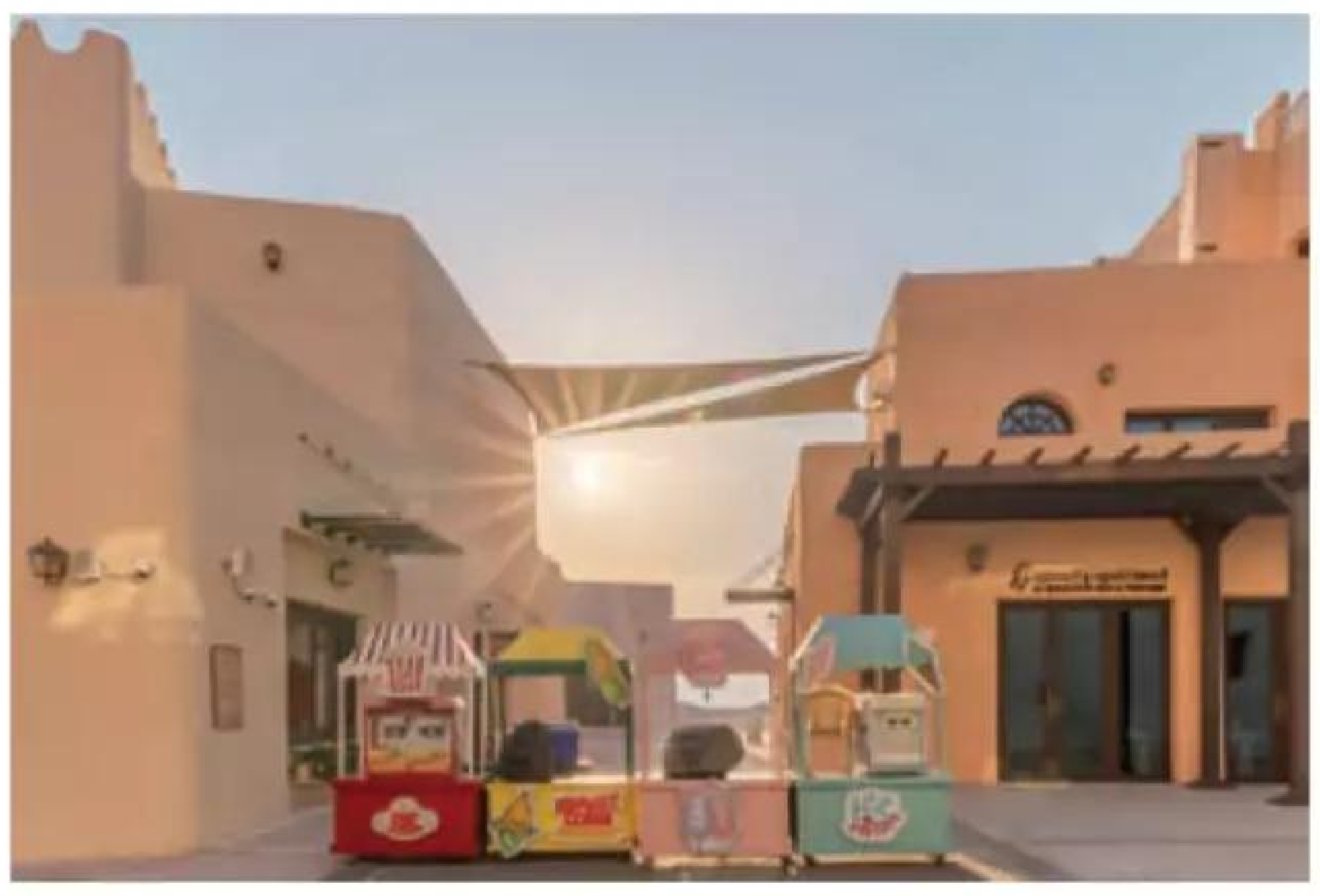


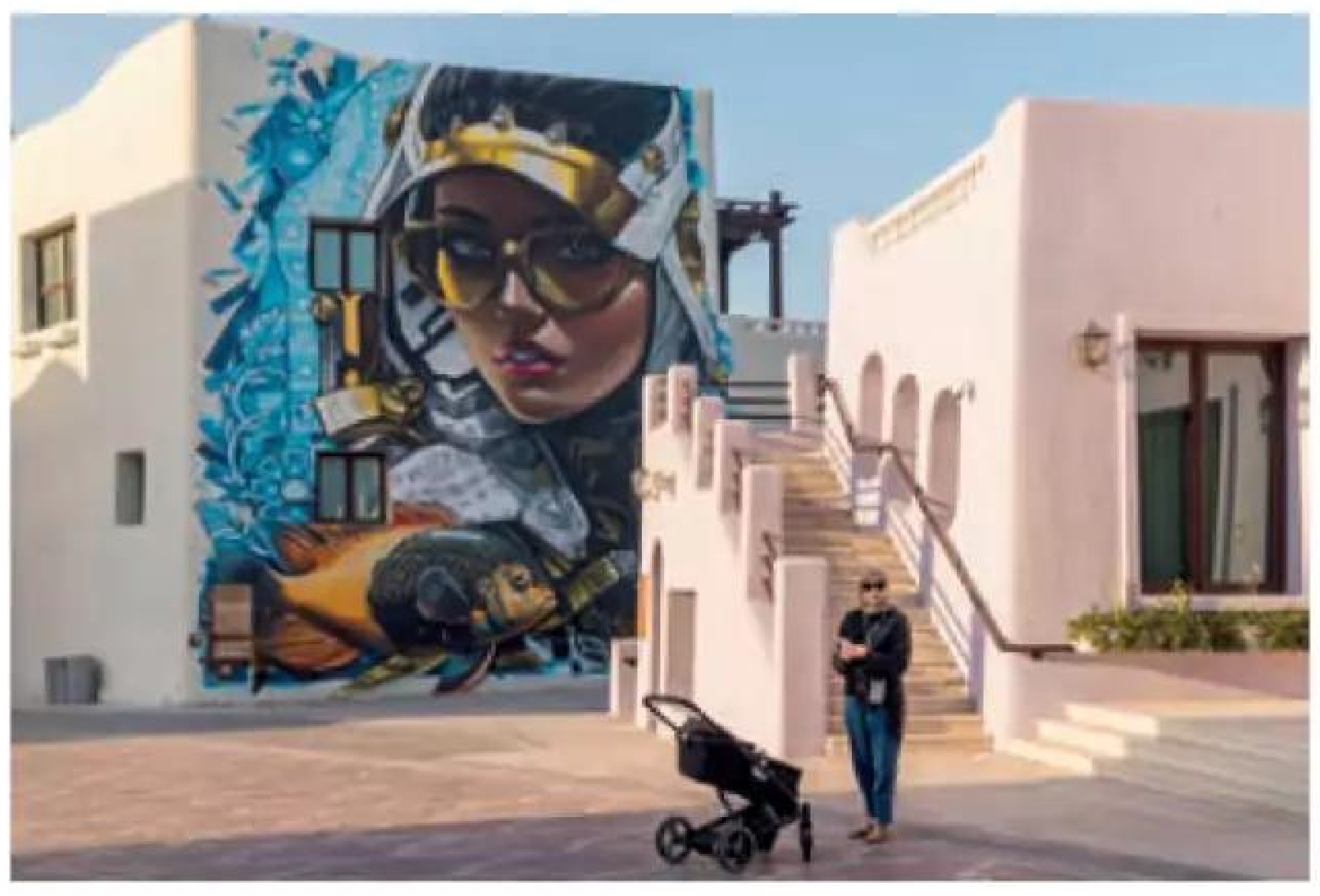


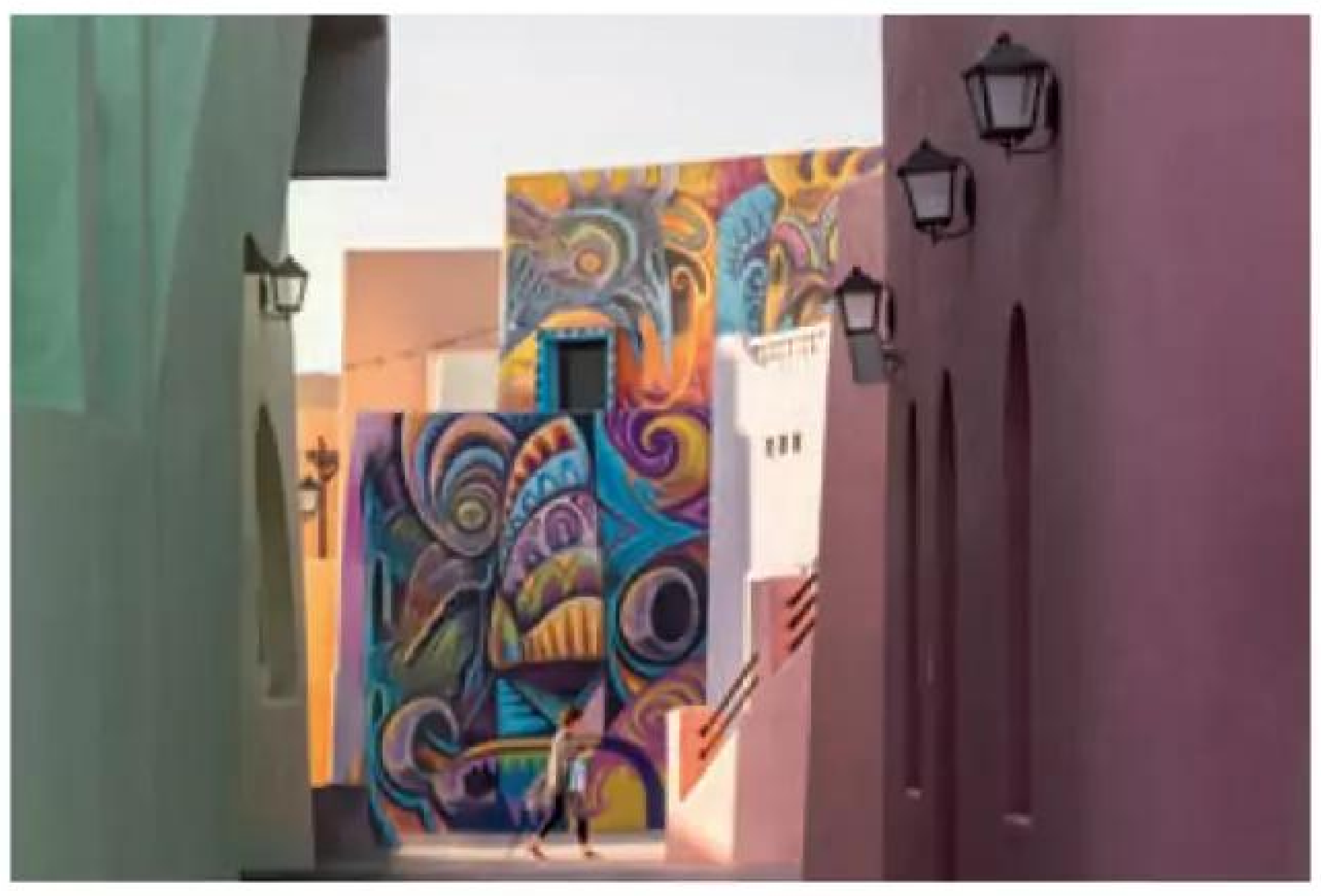
6. KIM TALENTO

PASTEL MIRAGE



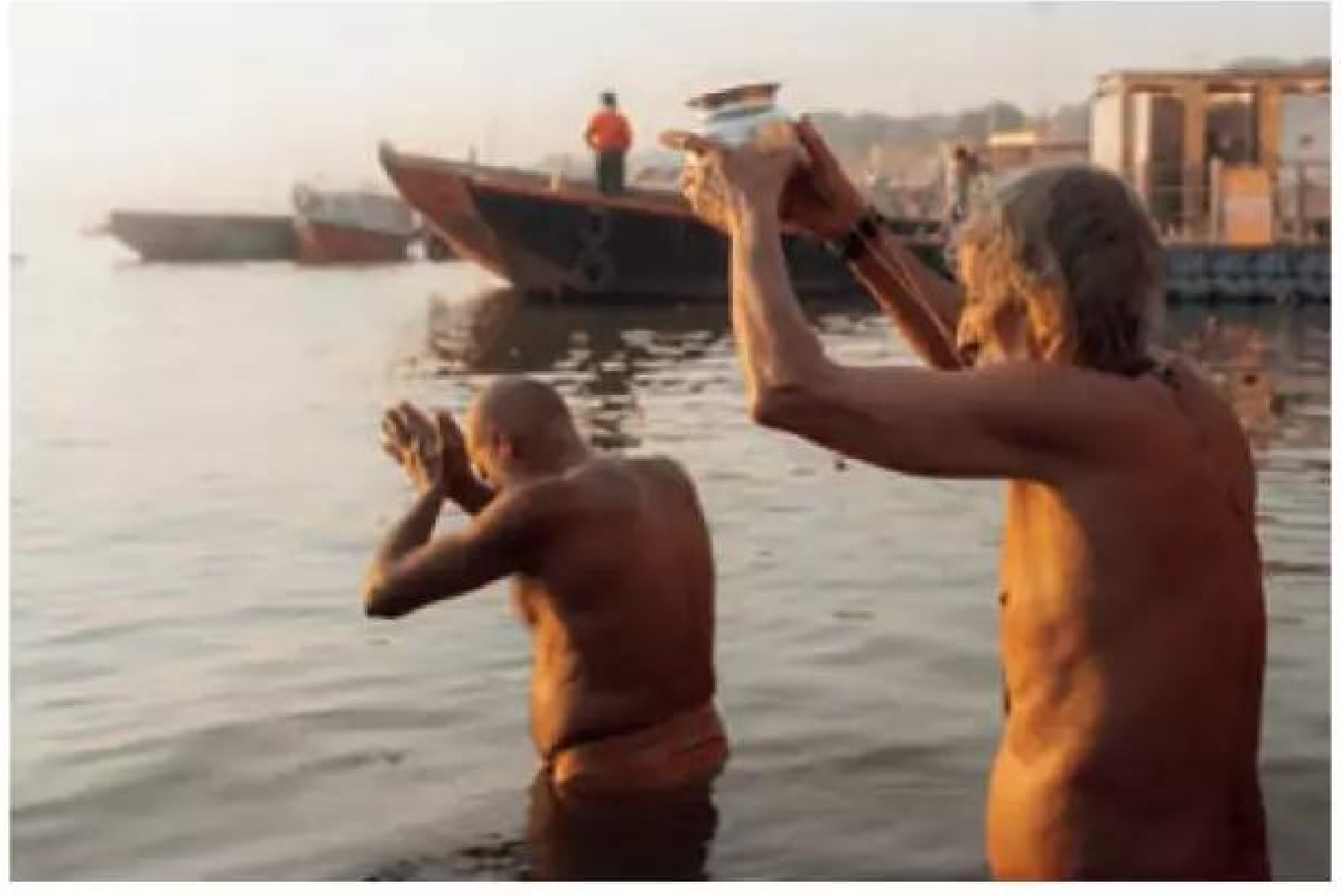


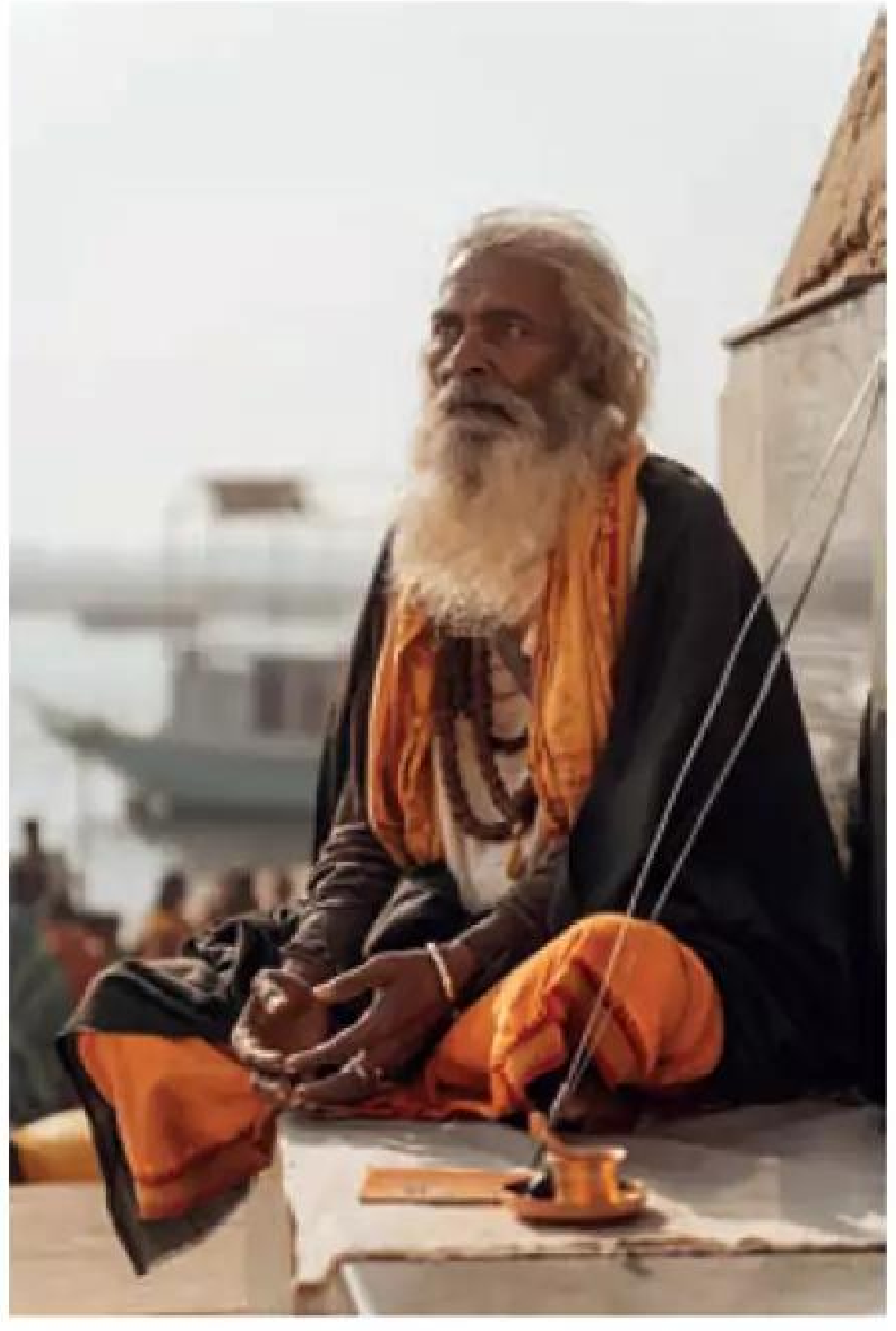


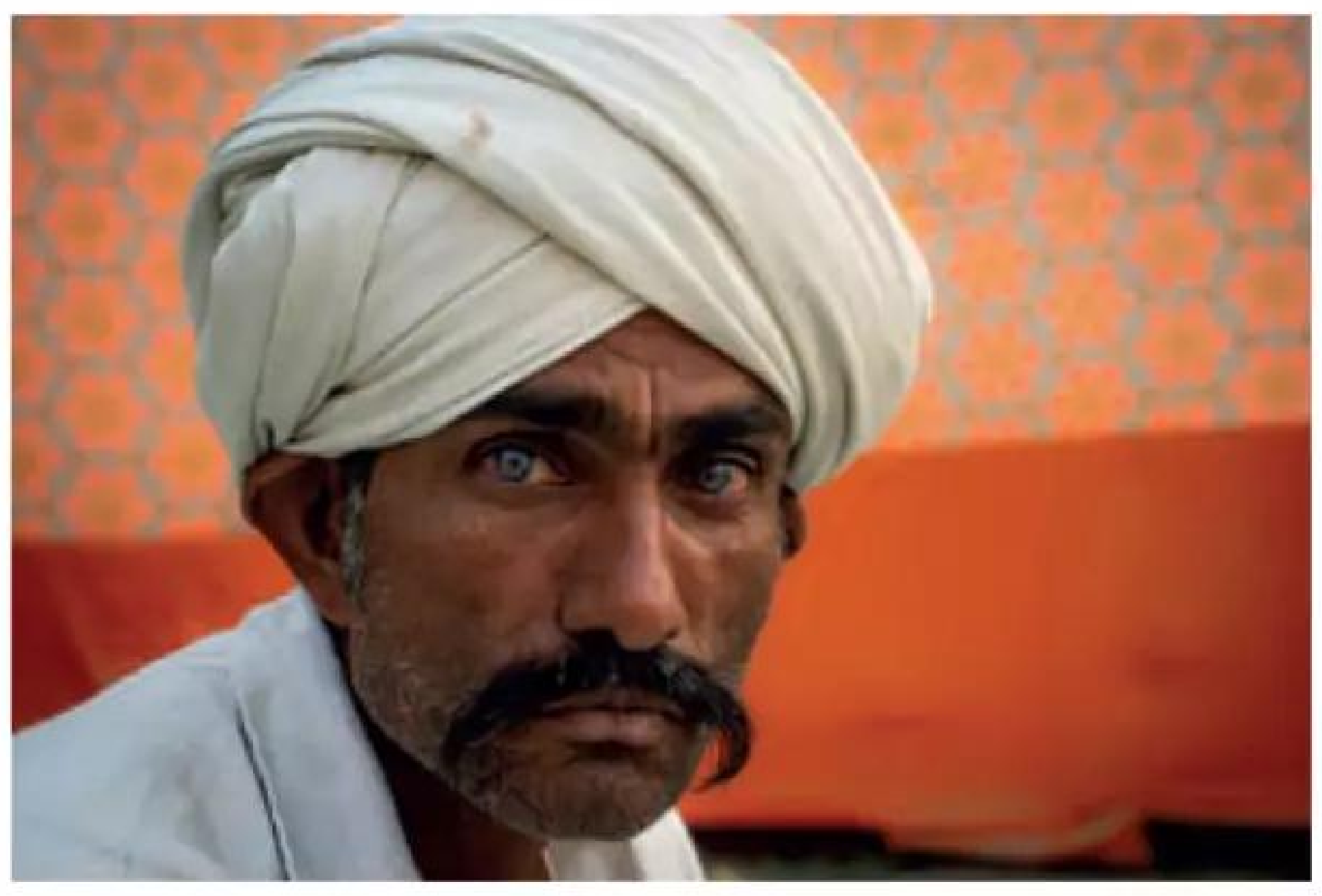


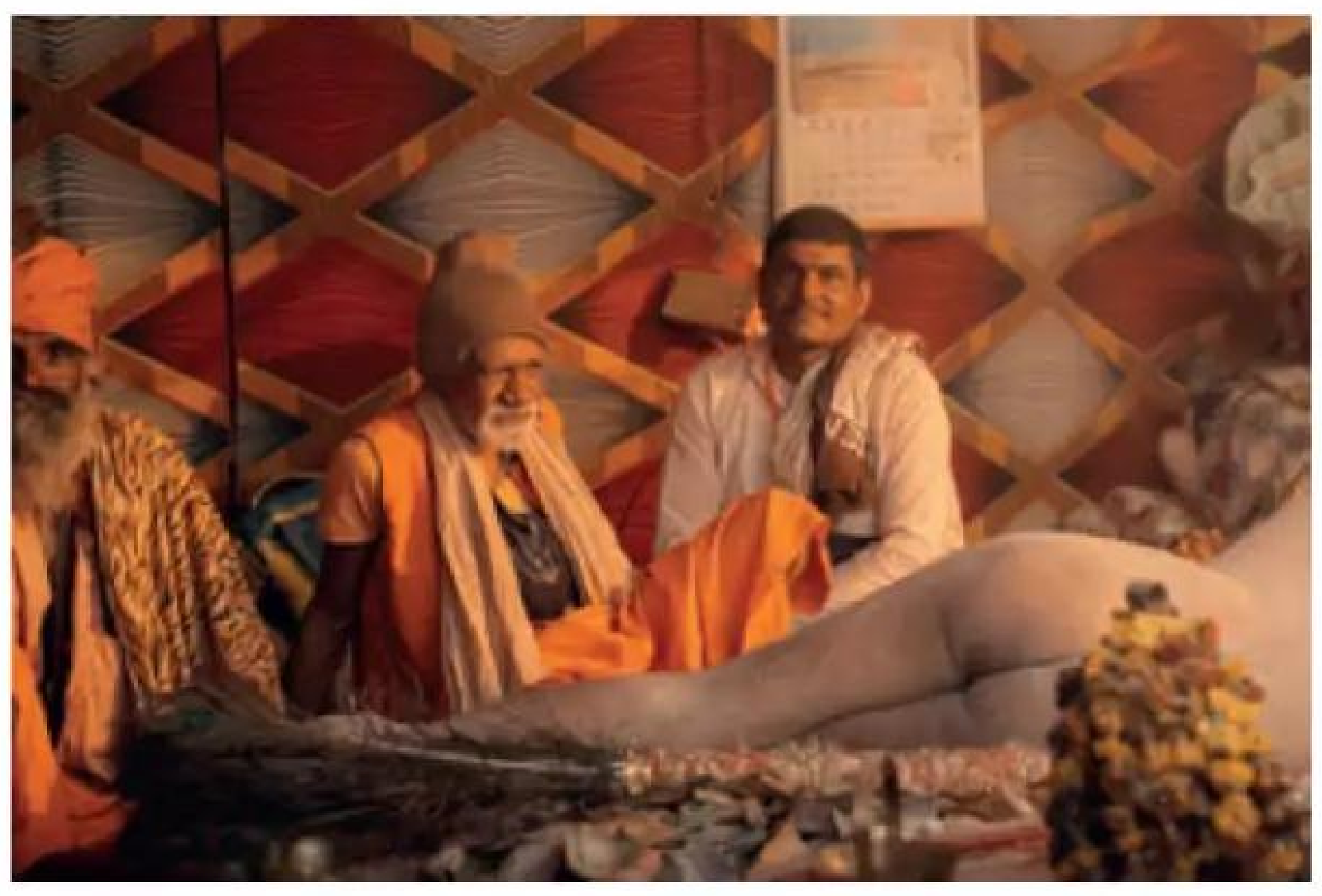
7. LODI PERTOVT

THE ORANGE GLOW OF MHLA KUMBH



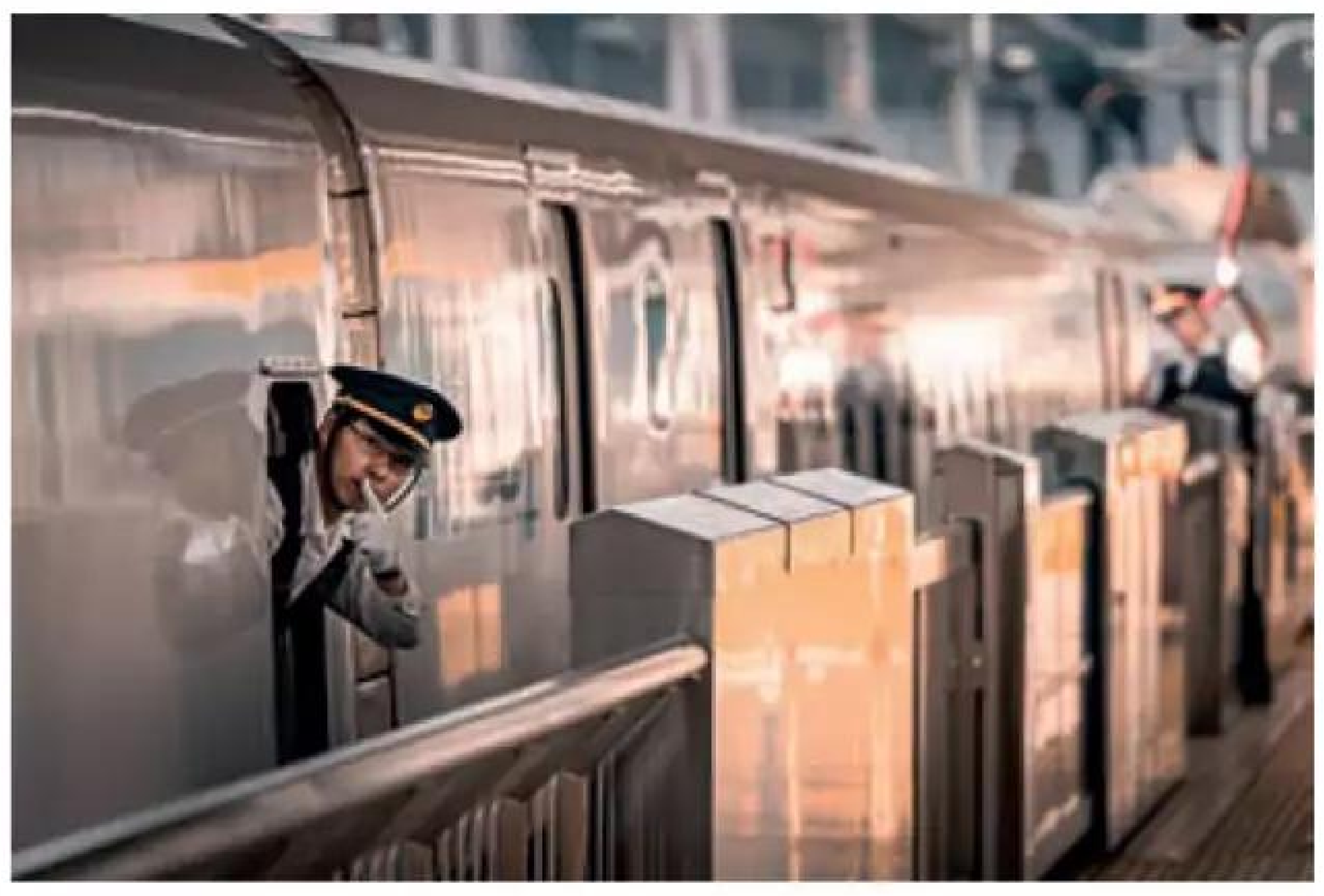


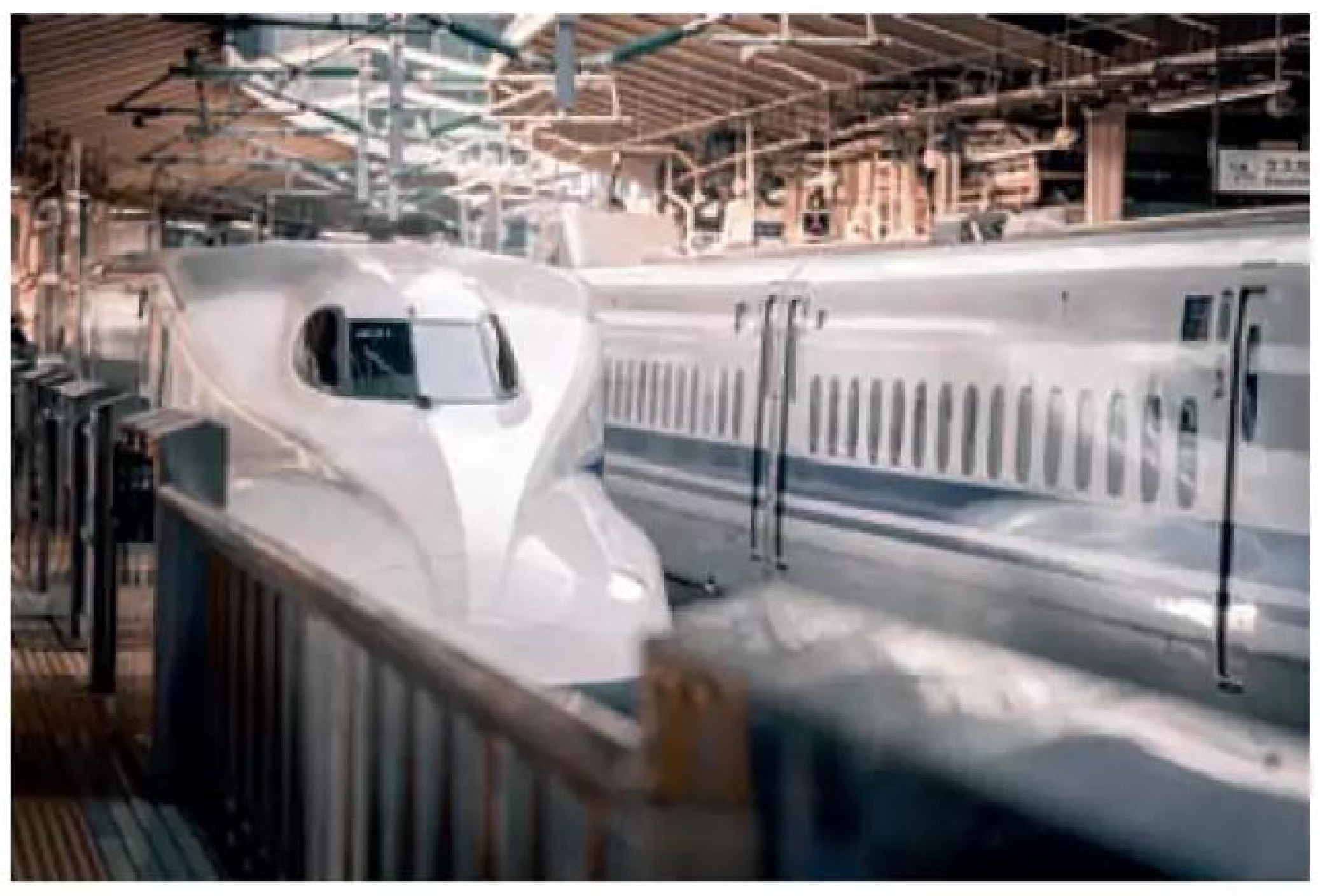


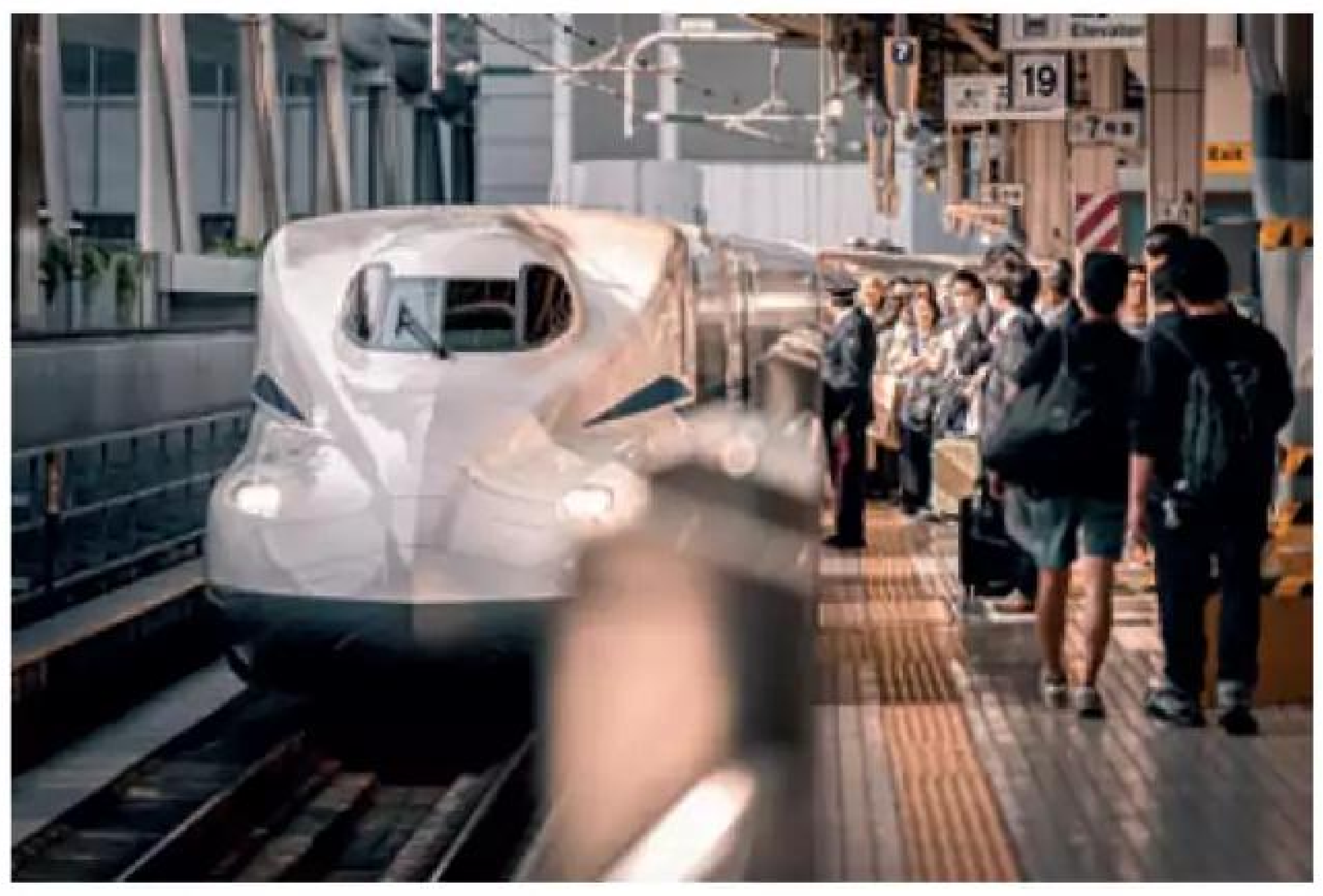


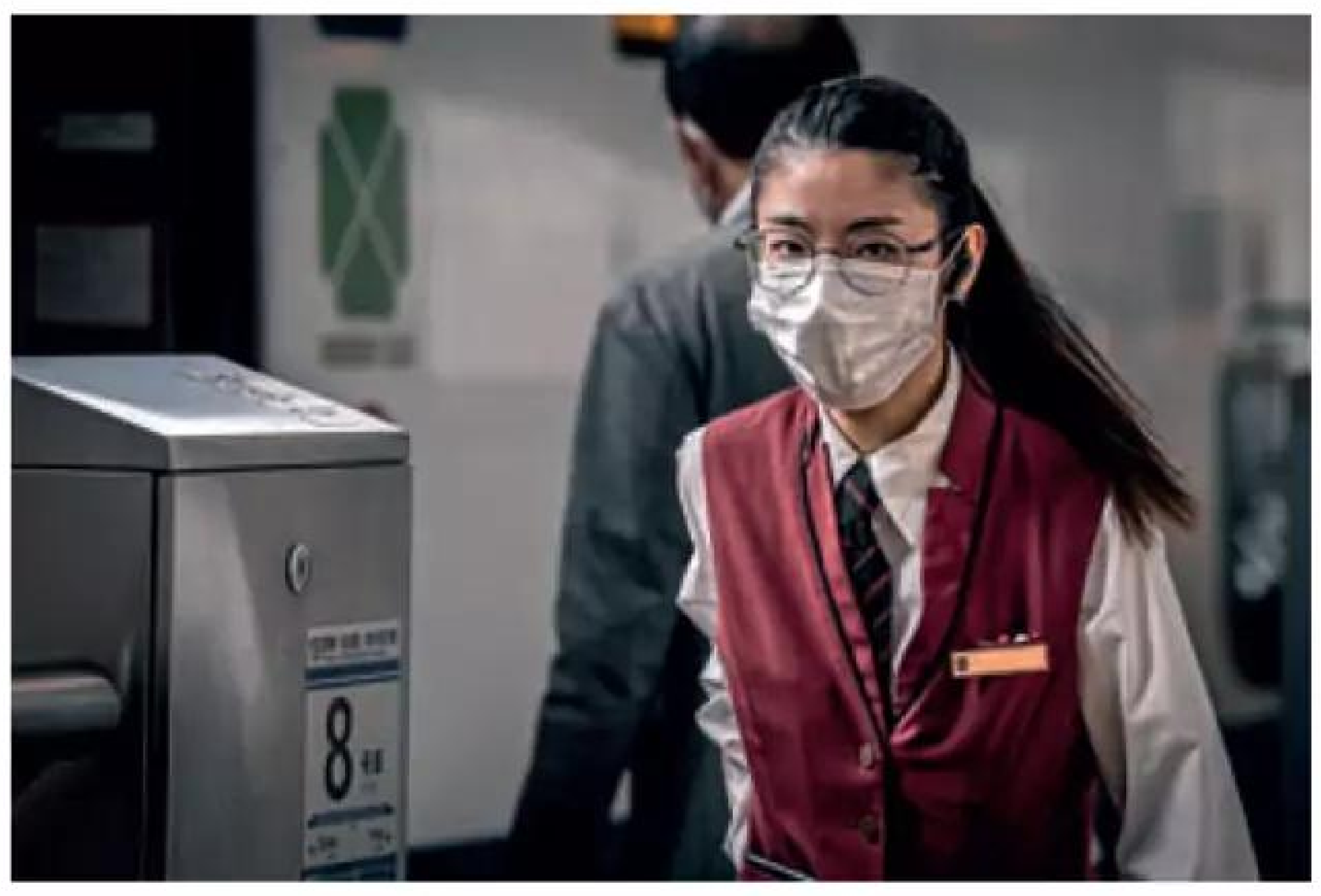
8. PATRICK TWELLS

SHINKANSEN









9. SONJA BELLA

HARMONY

10. RICHARD MISQUITTA

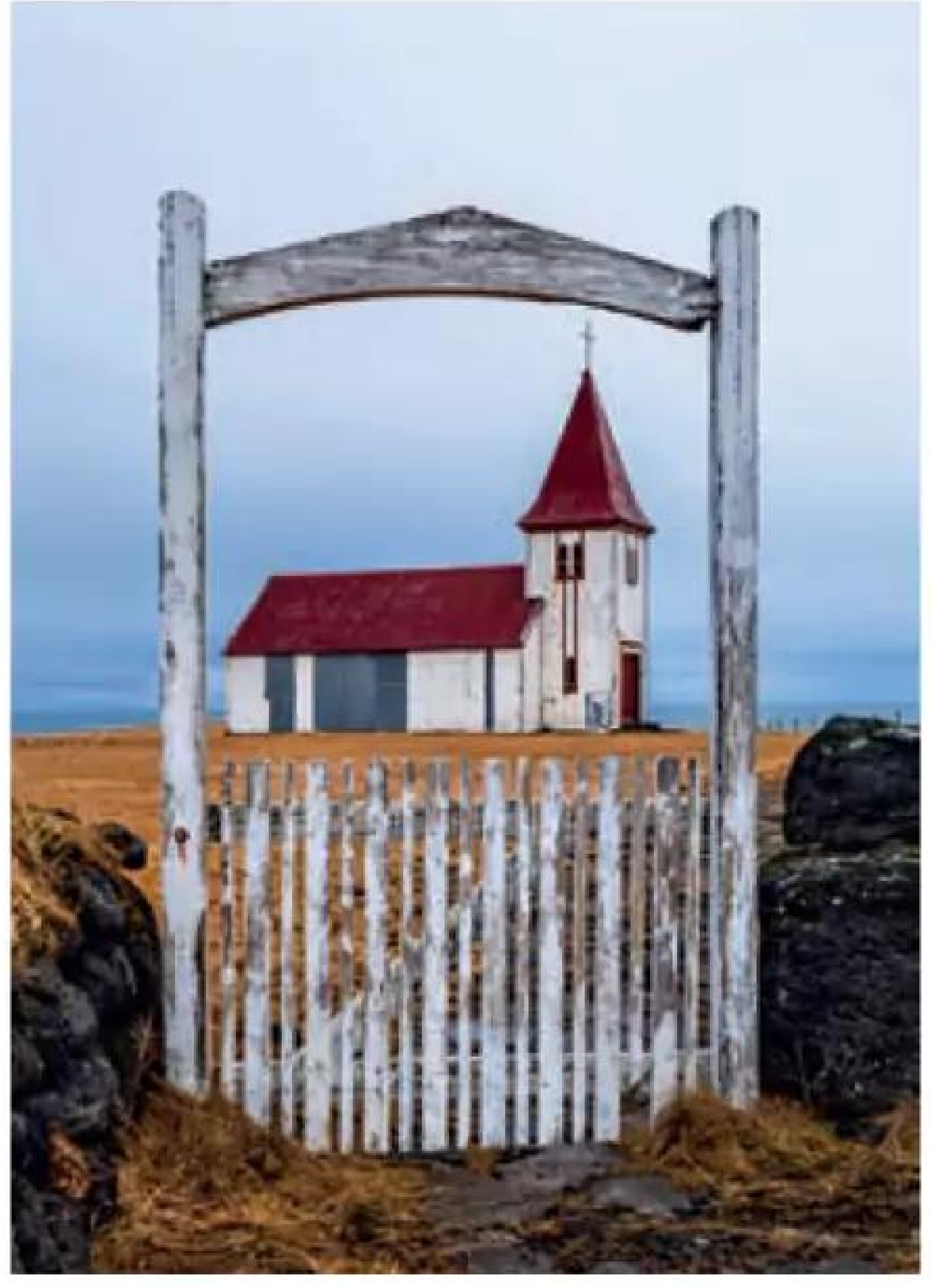
QUIETUDE

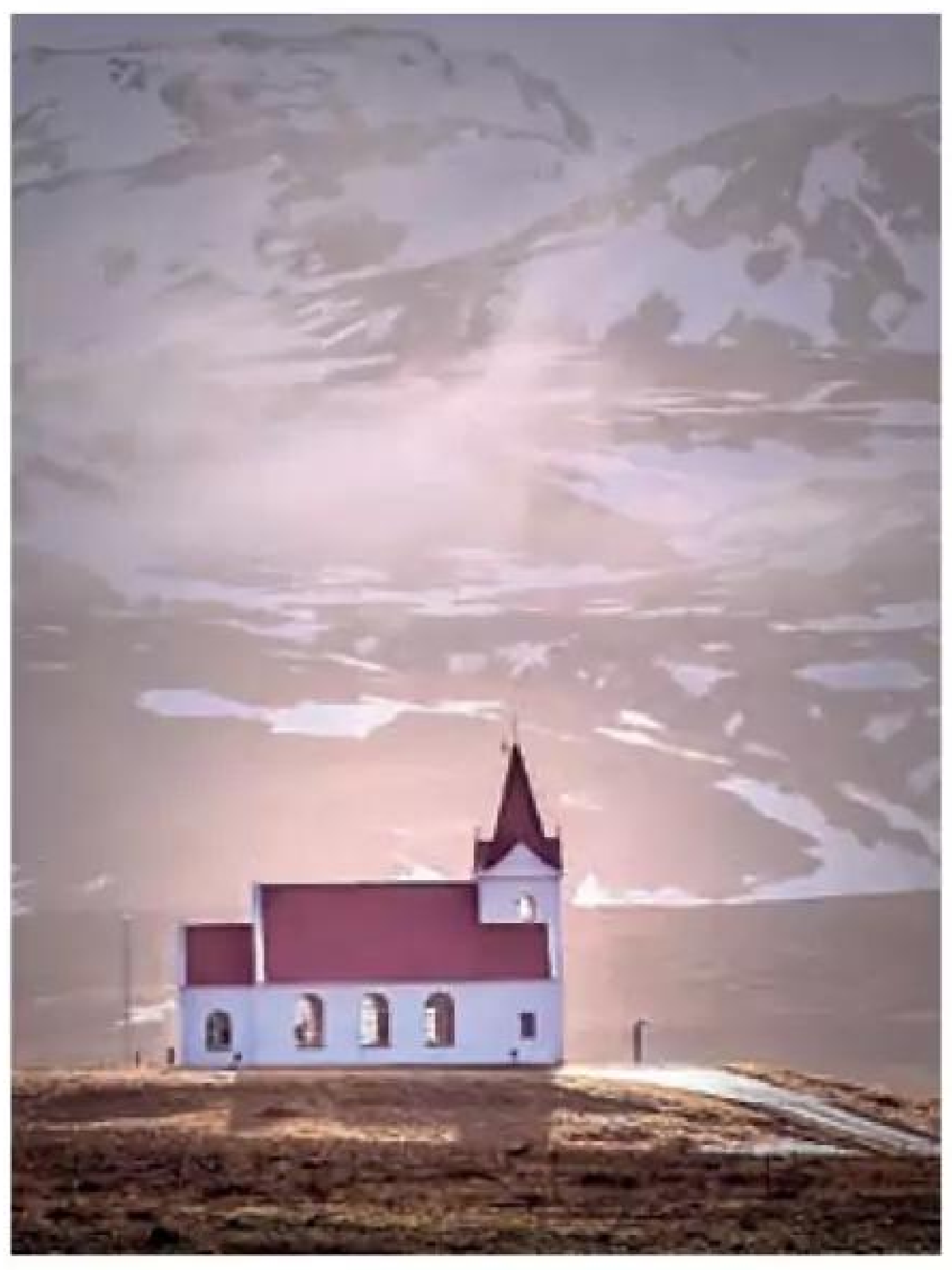
11. JUAN MIGUEL BELTRAN

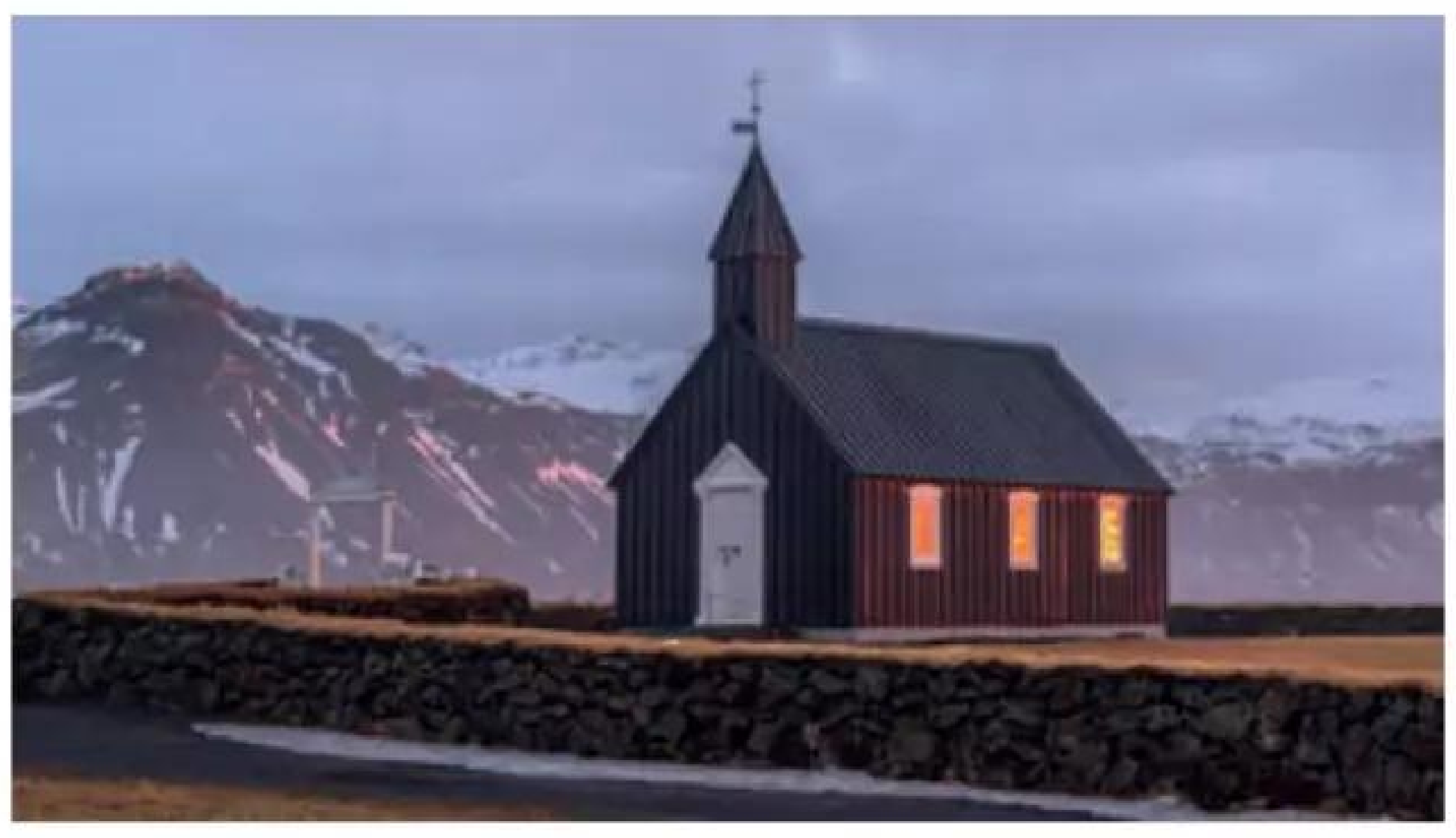
THE WILD MOUNTAIN

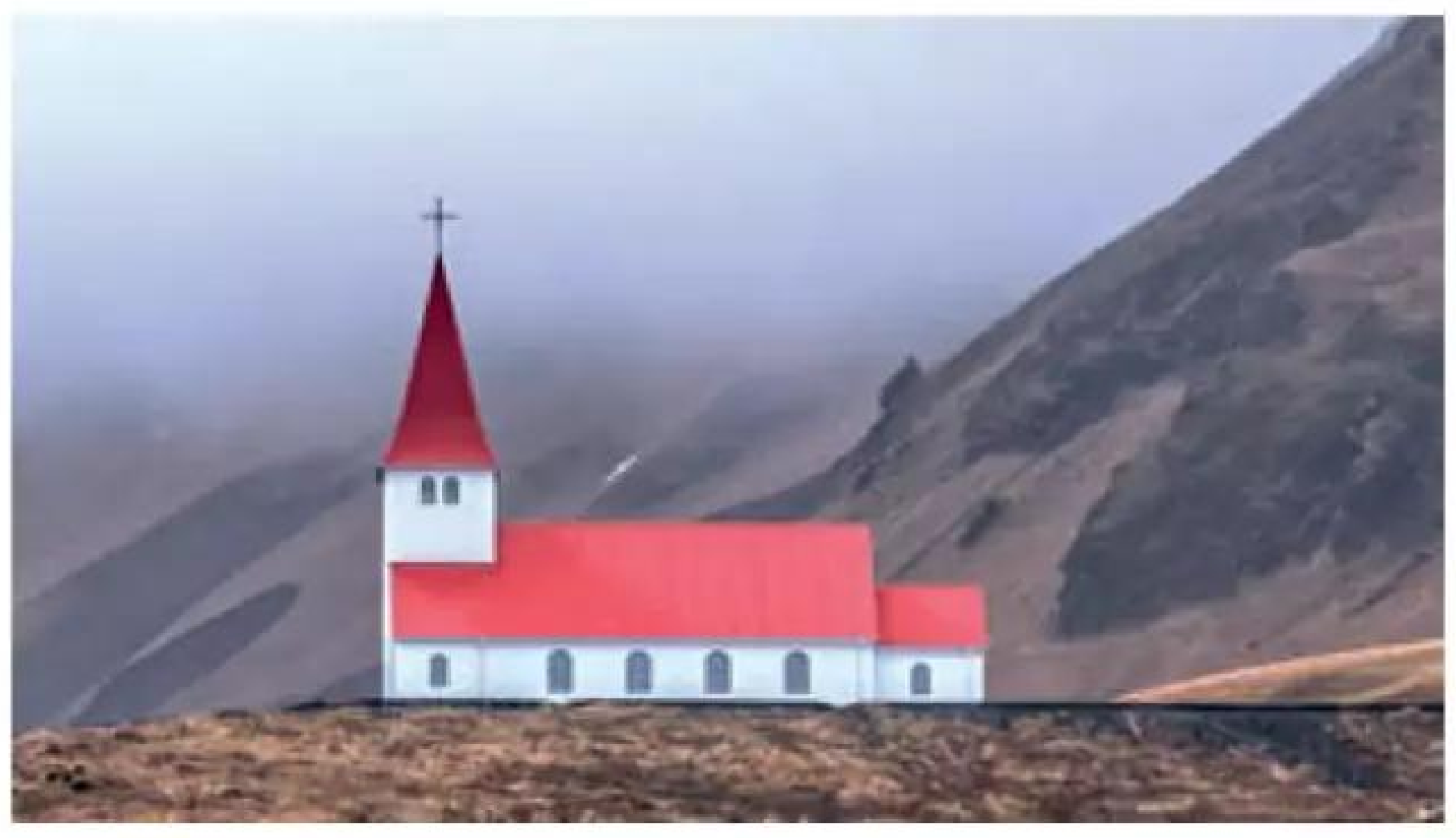
12. ALISON THORBURN

CHURCHES OF ICELAND



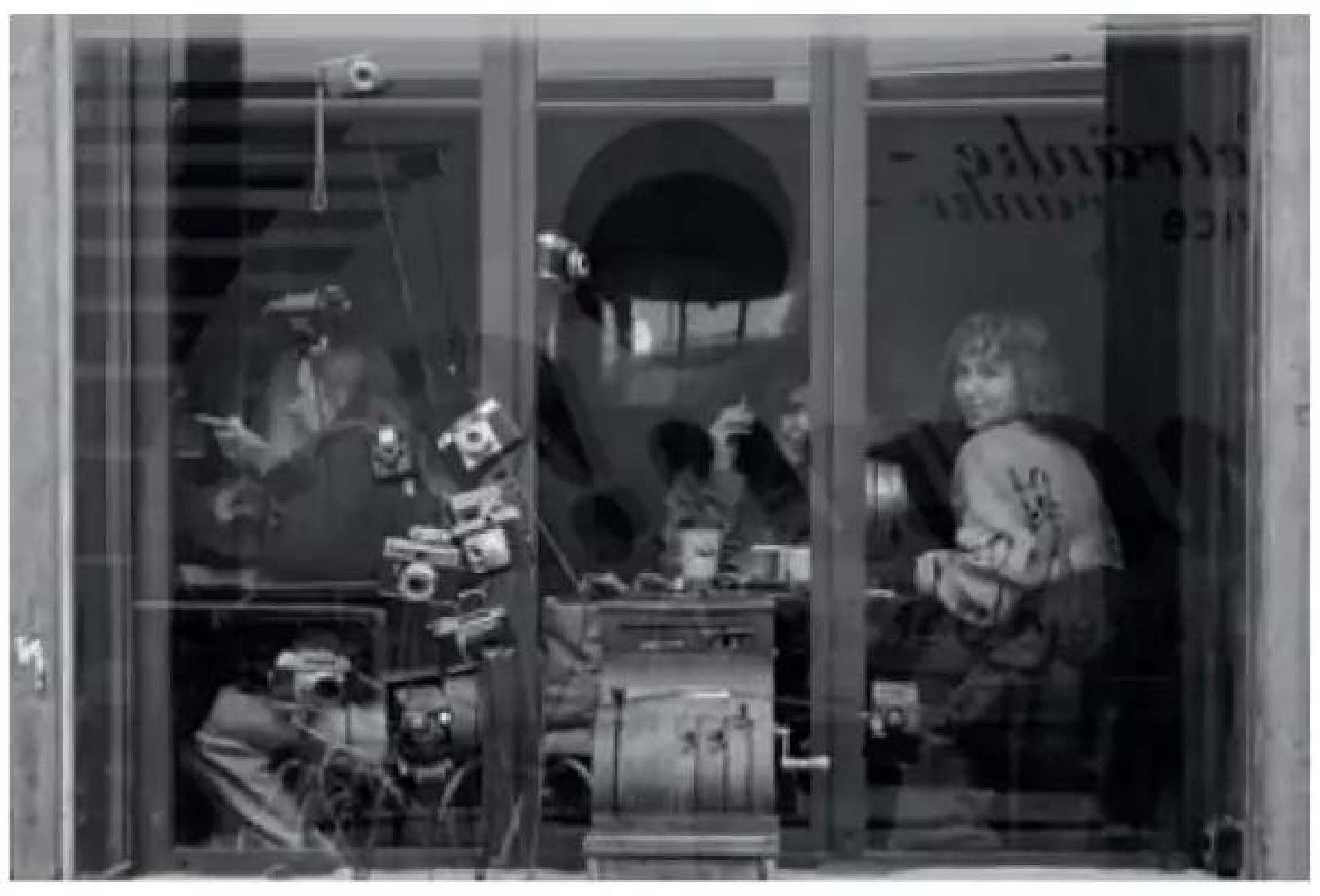


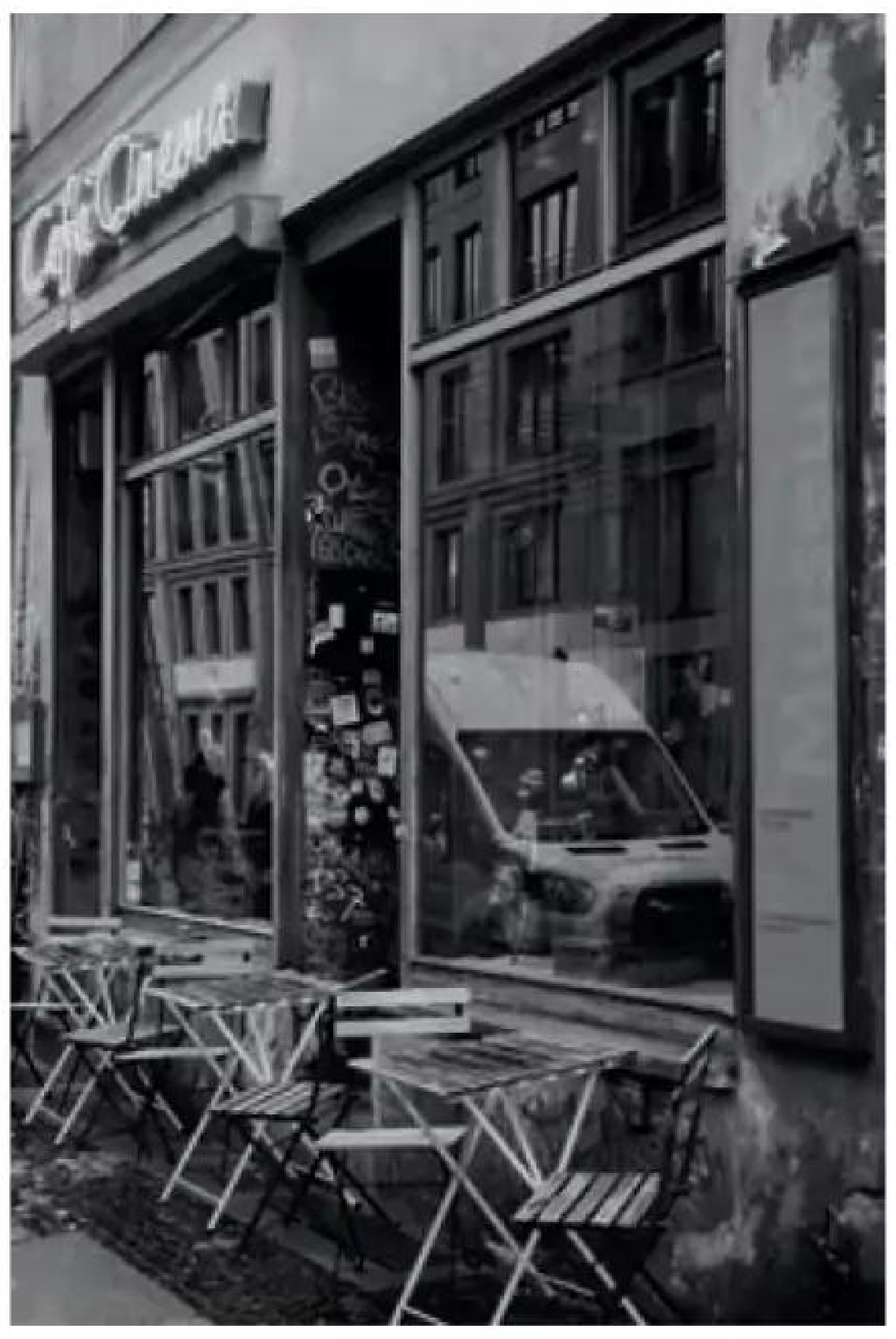


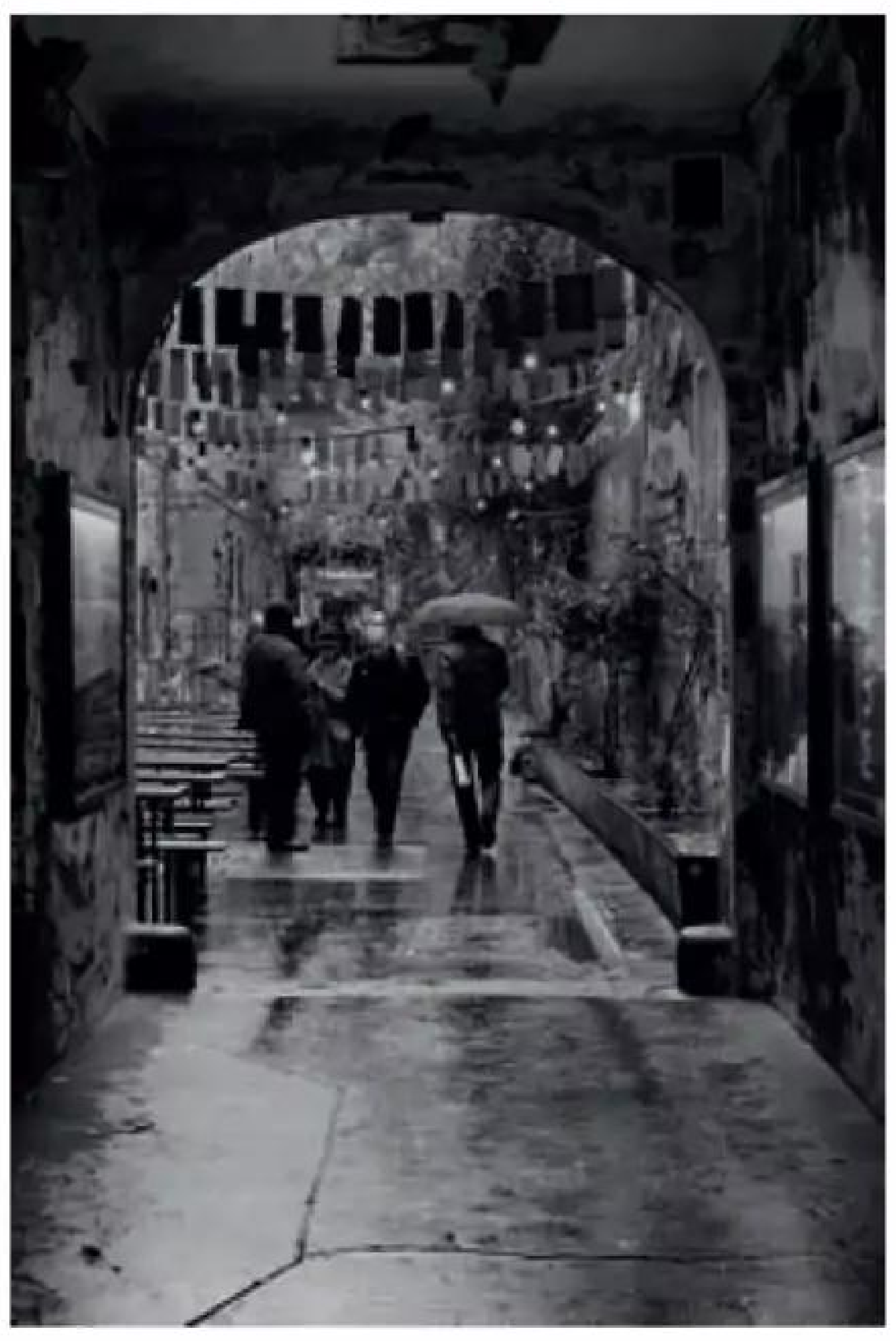


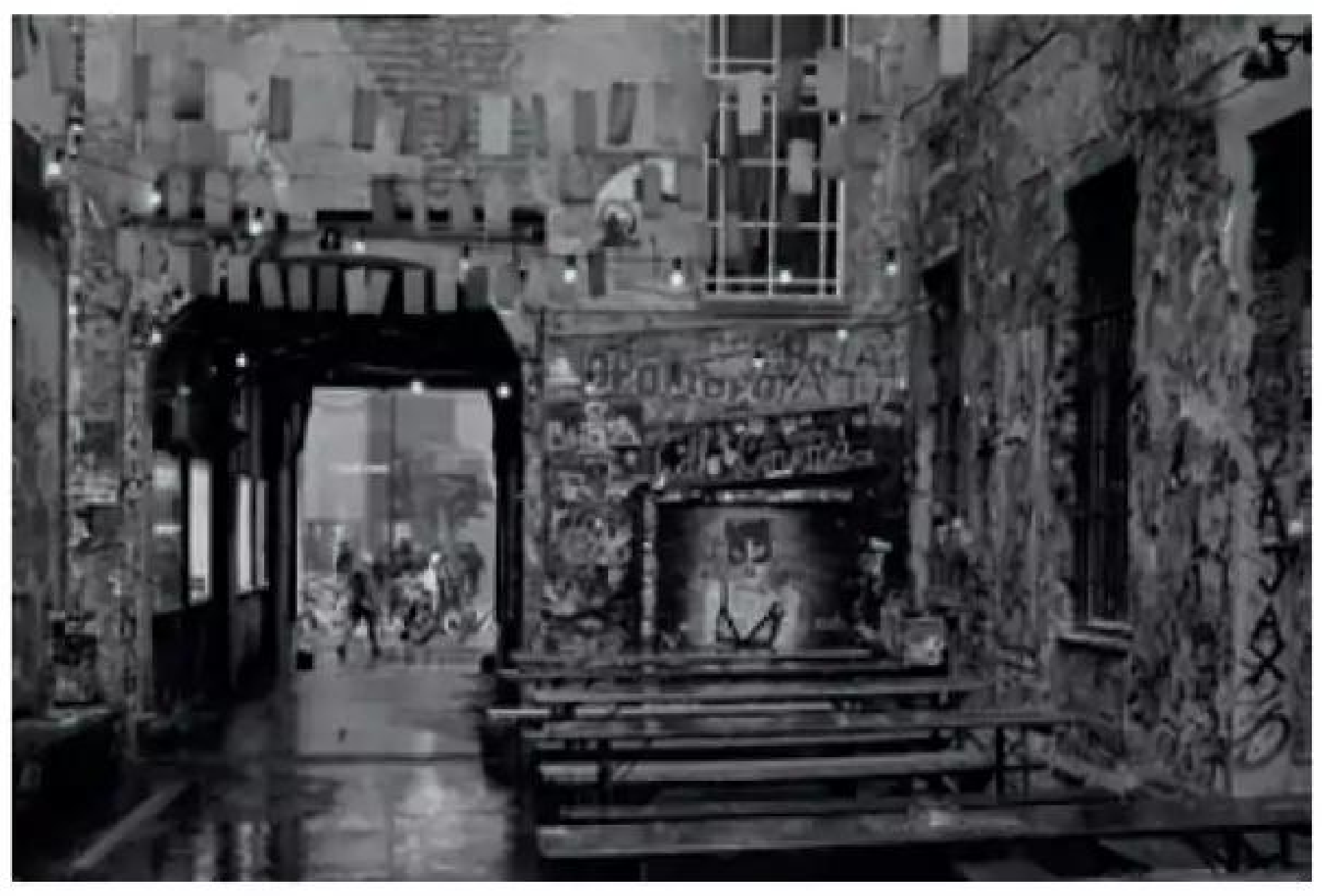
13. CATE REILLY

CAFE CINEMA & DEAD CHICKEN ALLEY, BERLIN MITTE, NOVEMBER 2024



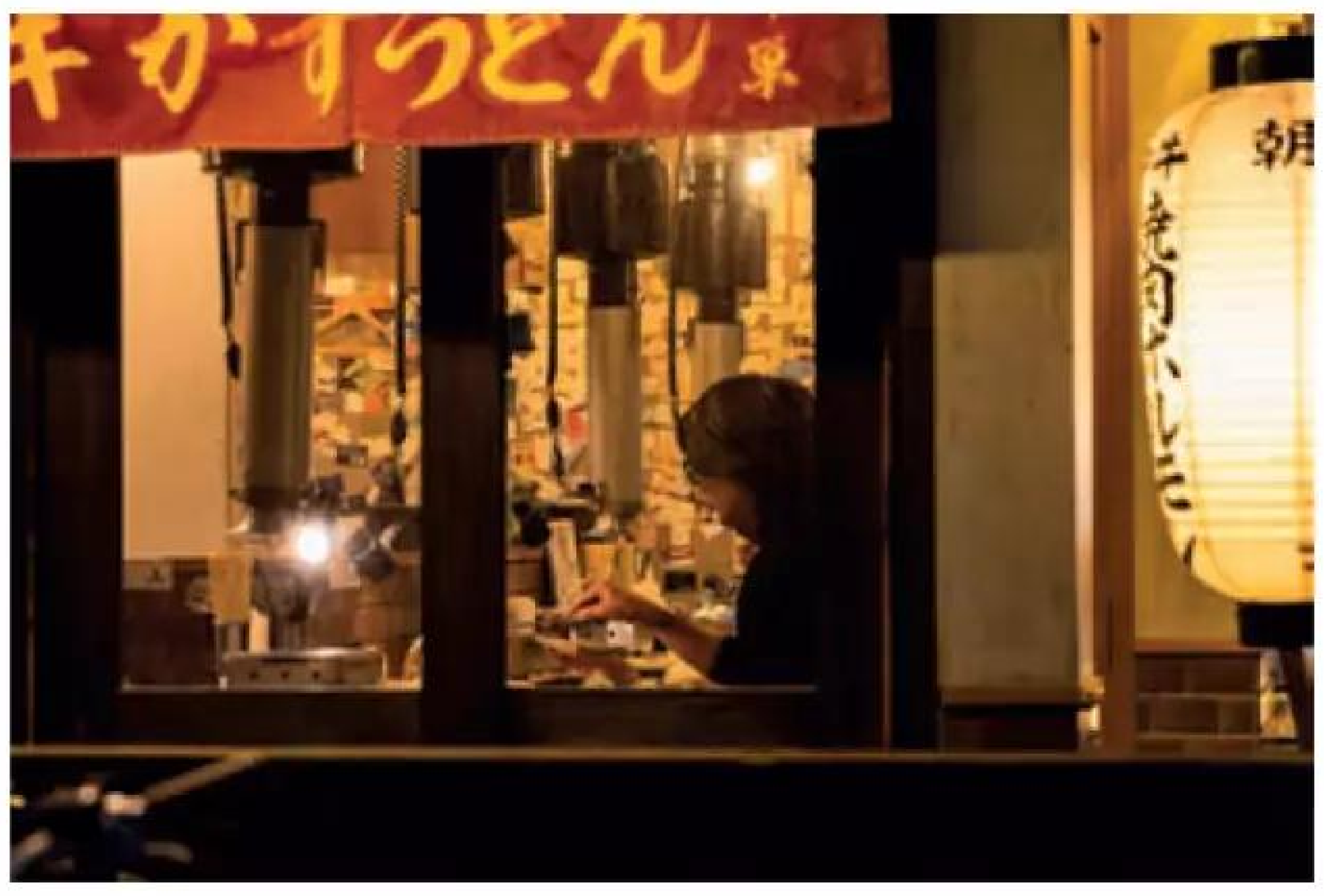


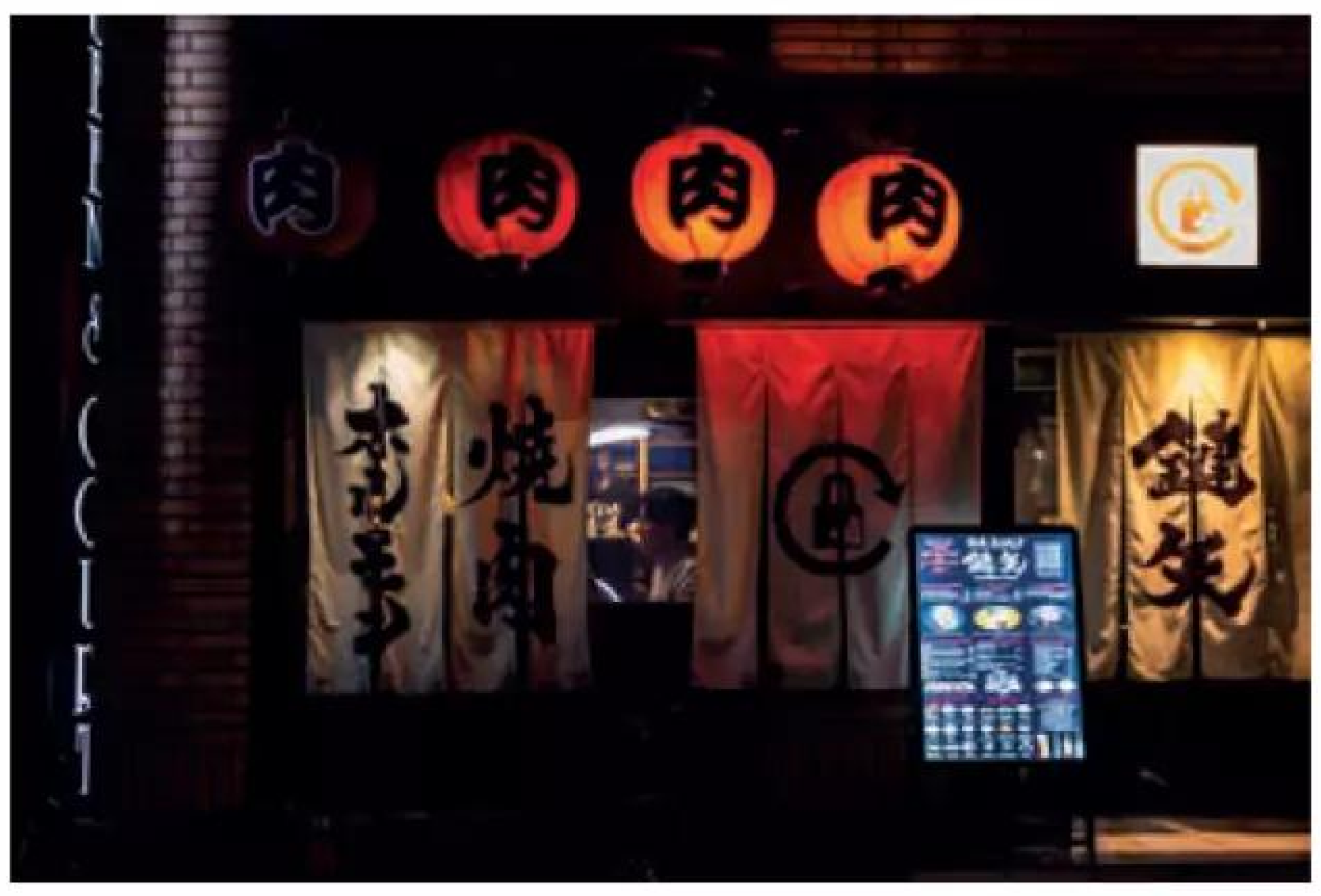


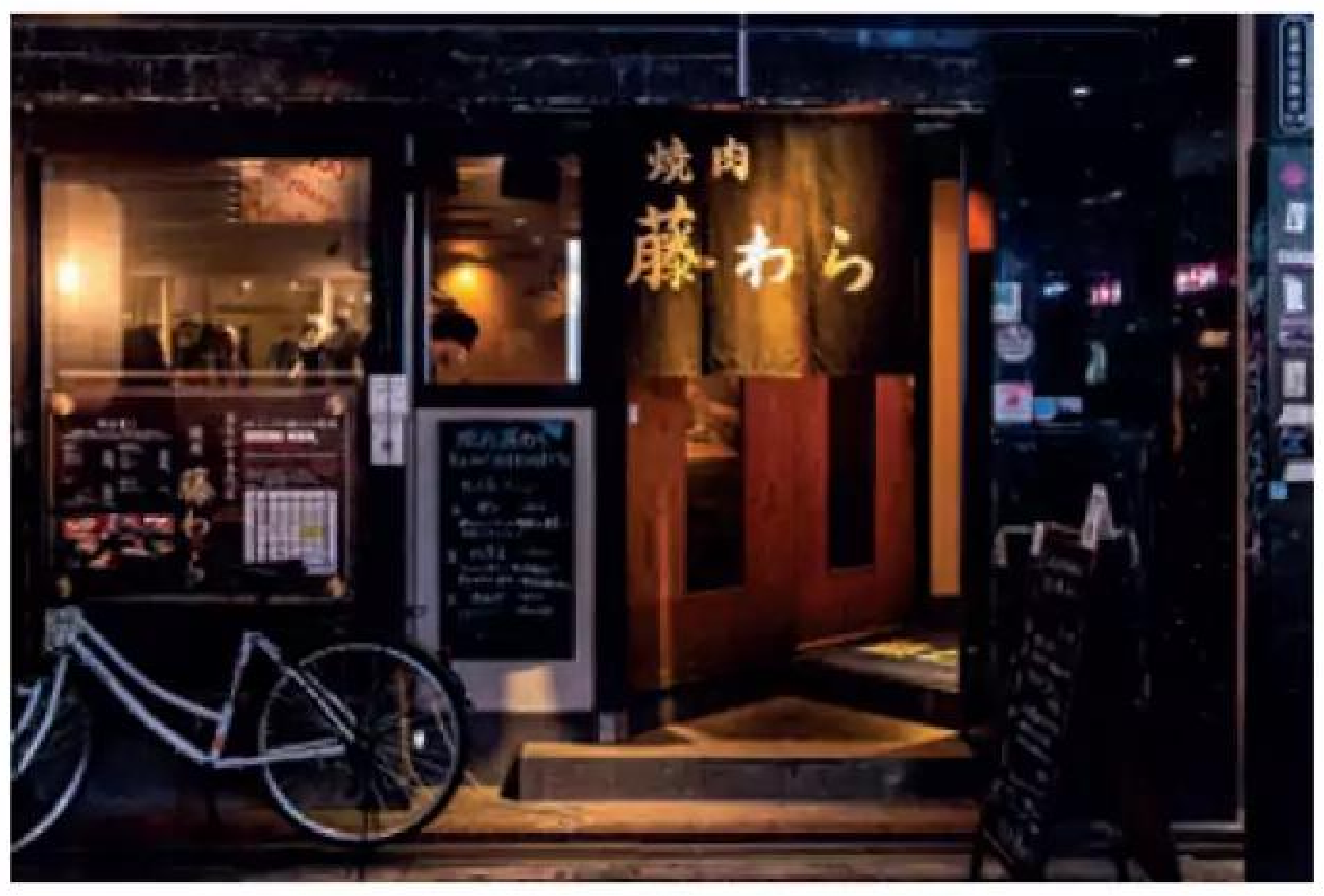


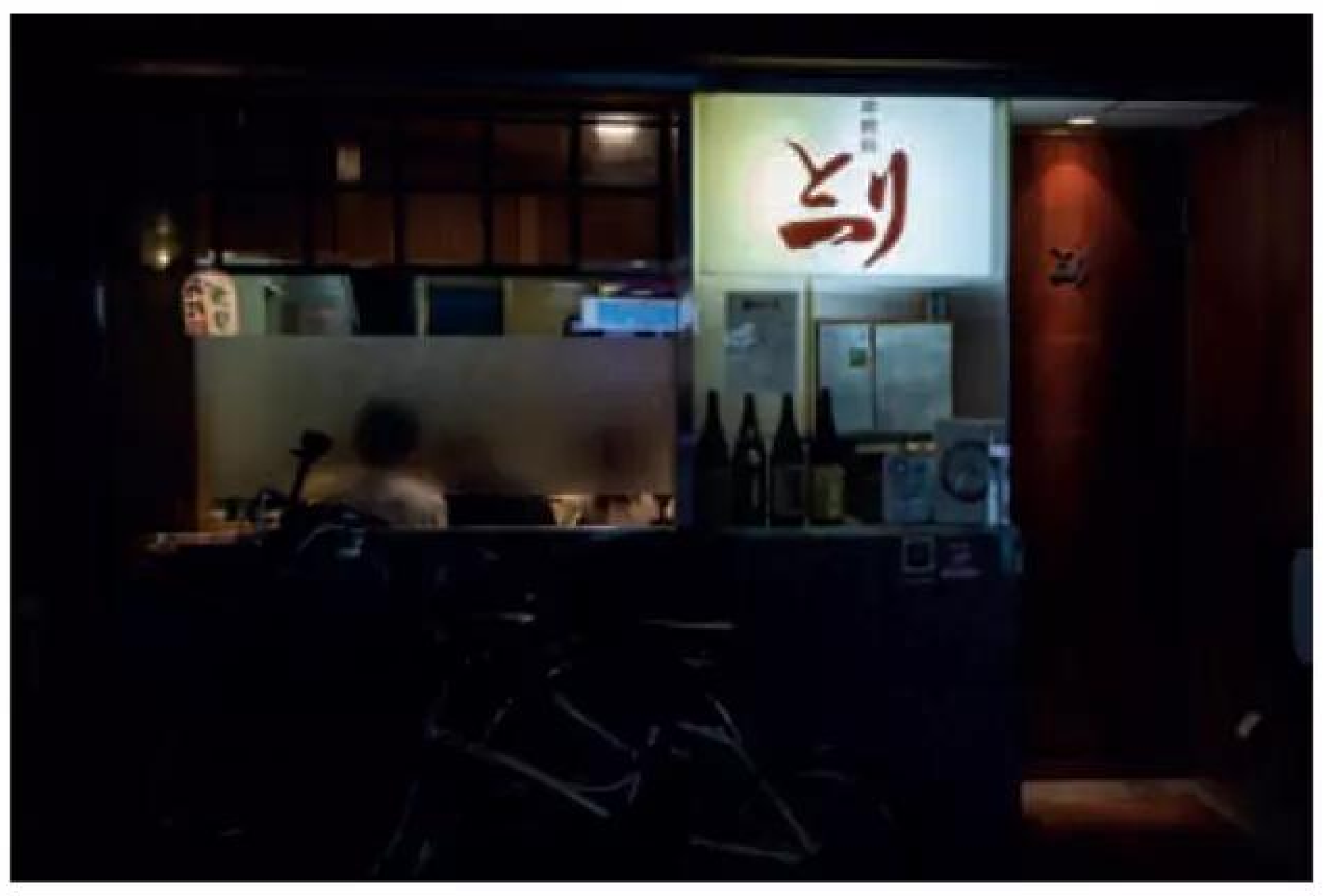
14. LYNNE ALDERTON

IN THE SHADOWS



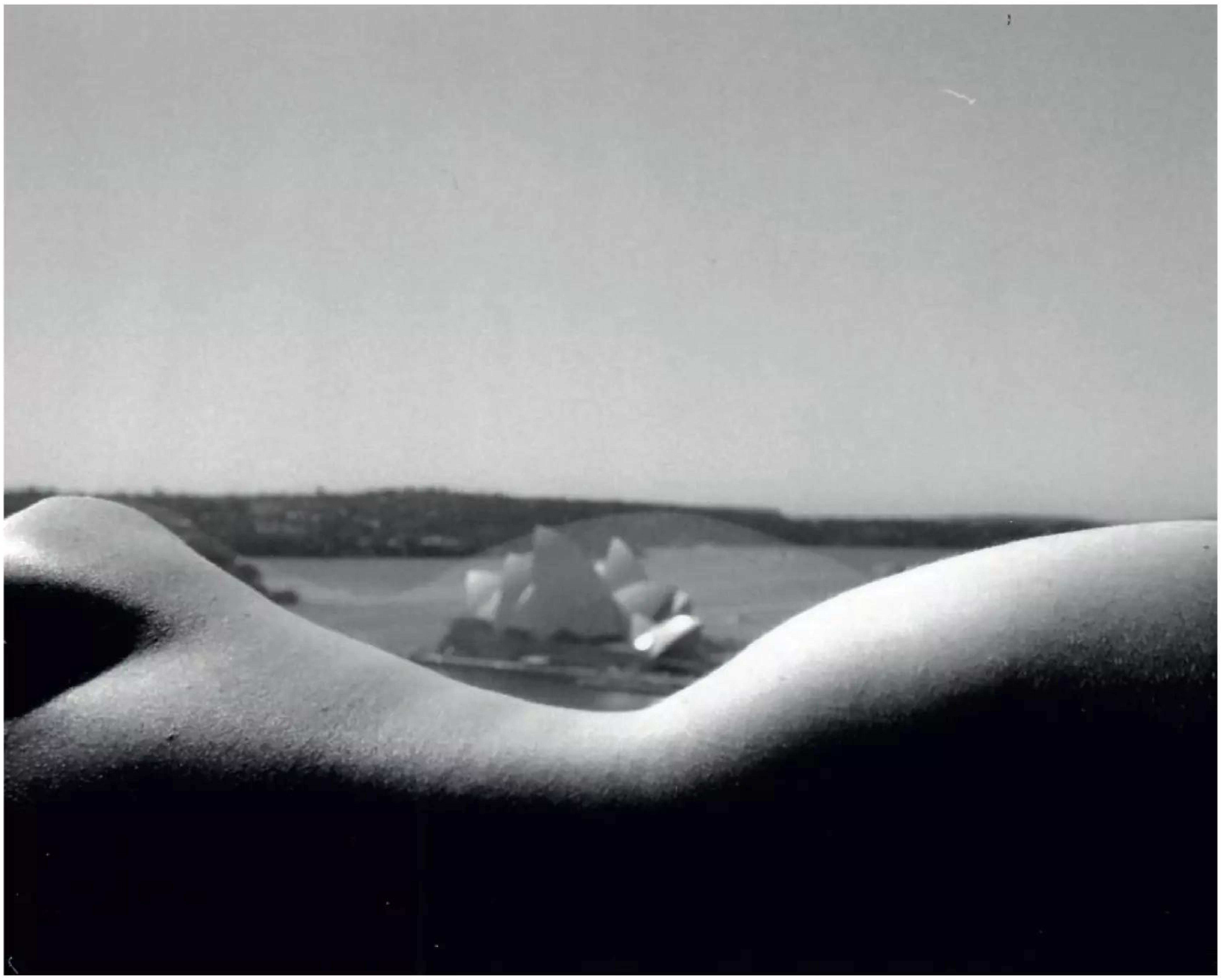






WINNER

SINGLE SHOT



MICHAEL MCSORLEY

AK

NORTHERN beaches photographer Michael McSorley tells us that despite spending many years photographing for personal satisfaction, his entry into the 2025 edition of Photographer of the Year marks his first foray into formal exhibition or competition.

He describes his winning work as drawing inspiration from masters like Max Dupain, and there are echoes of his iconic work *Sunbaker* in his image *AK*, captured on Ilford HP5 Plus film.

“This is my first nude image, but instead of a dune it was a suite at the Shangri La,” McSorley says.

“I wanted to contrast and complement the simple beauty of the female form against the equally beautiful Harbour and ‘that’ building. It’s about love.”

“Jørn Utzon said that the Opera House is his expression of love and I feel it when I’m there. I wanted to find my own work that did this,” he says.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

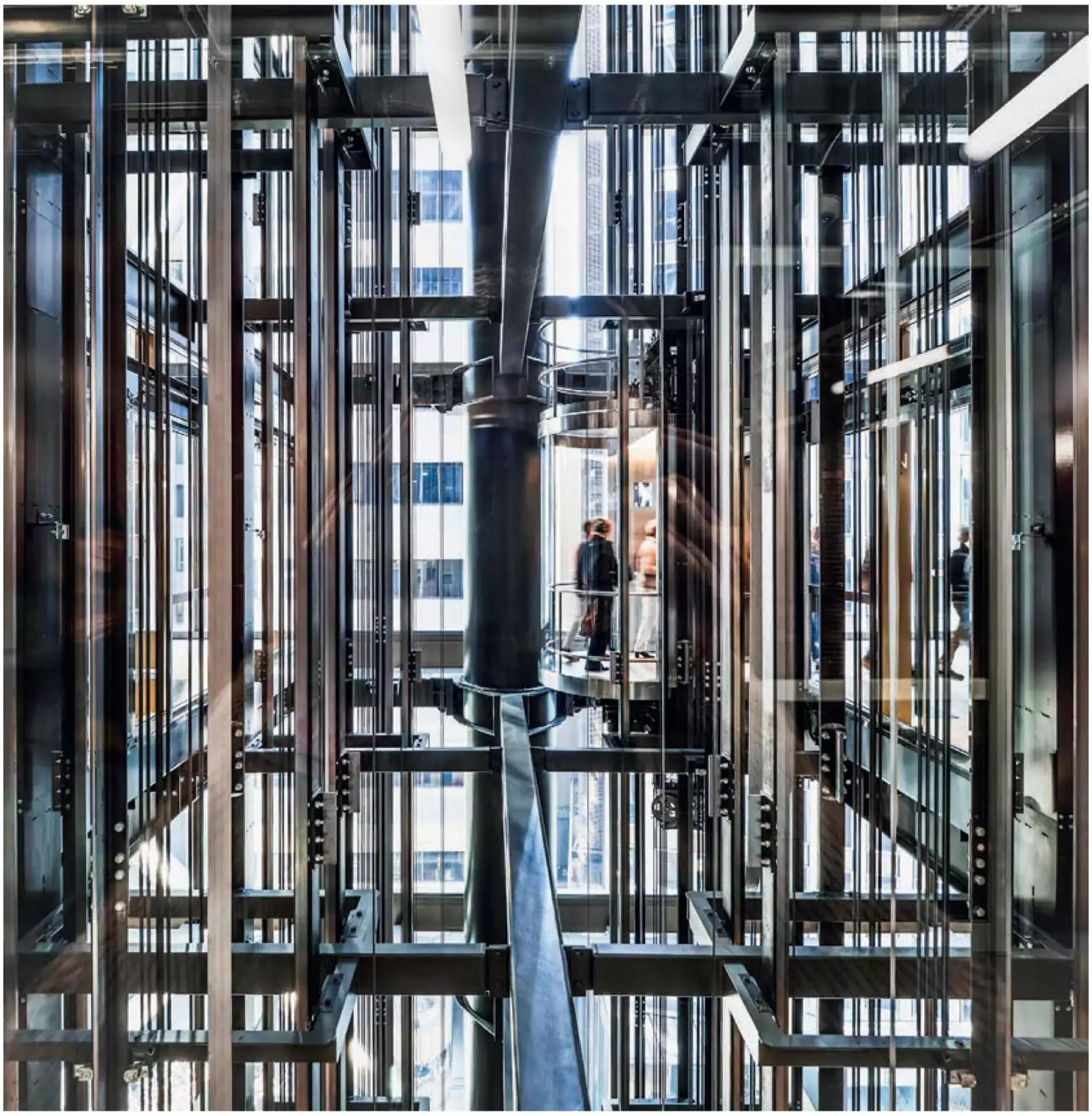
DREW HOPPER: Using the curves of the human form to beautifully mirror the sweeping lines of the Sydney Opera House, Michael’s image creates a uniquely Australian interplay between body and architecture. A simple, sensual, and striking monochrome with subtle film grain deepening the classic, enduring quality, I loved how the image drew on the timeless elegance of Max Dupain.

DOUWE DIJKSTRA: Human curves mirroring architectural curves? I’m not entirely sure what I’m looking at, but it’s an intriguing and mysterious image regardless. That mystery gives it a quality and strength that made it a winner.

PRIZE: $1,500 cash, JOBO 1500L LAB Kit L Starter Film Developing Kit with Roller Base (Large) and 2 x JOBO 1501 Duo-Set Film Reel valued at $475, and a Photobookshop HD layflat photobook valued at $289, plus three Retouch4Me photo retouching apps.

RUNNER-UP

SINGLE SHOT



KATHY WALLACE

@kathywallace.photography

GOING UP

KATHY Wallace says photography helps you see places in a new way, with a focus on design and aesthetics. That eye for detail is what has drawn the Sydney-based photographer to architecture photography.

Her Single Shot runner-up winning image, *Going Up*, was captured during a Museums of History NSW tour of the new 1 Elizabeth building in Sydney.

"On the tour, the lift system was highlighted for its design, bringing more light into the centre of the building. It seemed futuristic as the lifts whizzed up and down, and I was mesmerised. Despite the reflective glass, I was able to get close and take this image. The graphic nature of the lines really drew my eye, and seeing people exiting one of the lift 'capsules' brought the image to life."

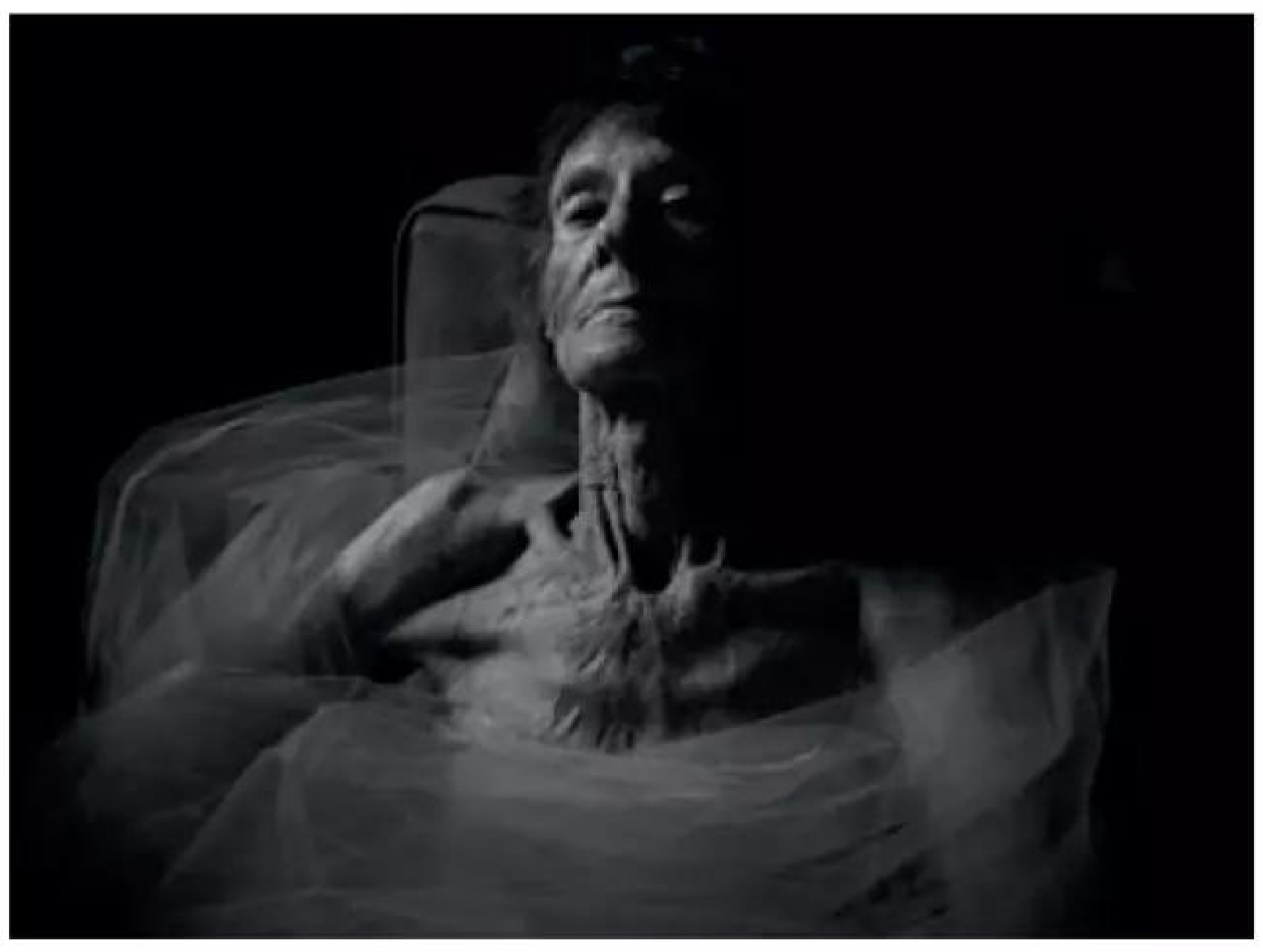
WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

DOUWE DIJKSTRA: Kathy's Single Shot runner-up image is, at first glance, a strong and solid square composition. But it's really more than that. I loved the depth of field and awesome sense of scale created in this scene. But where it stands out is Kathy's ability to identify what is a visually complex scene in a creative way. It's a winner in my book.

PRIZE: $200 Ted's Cameras voucher.

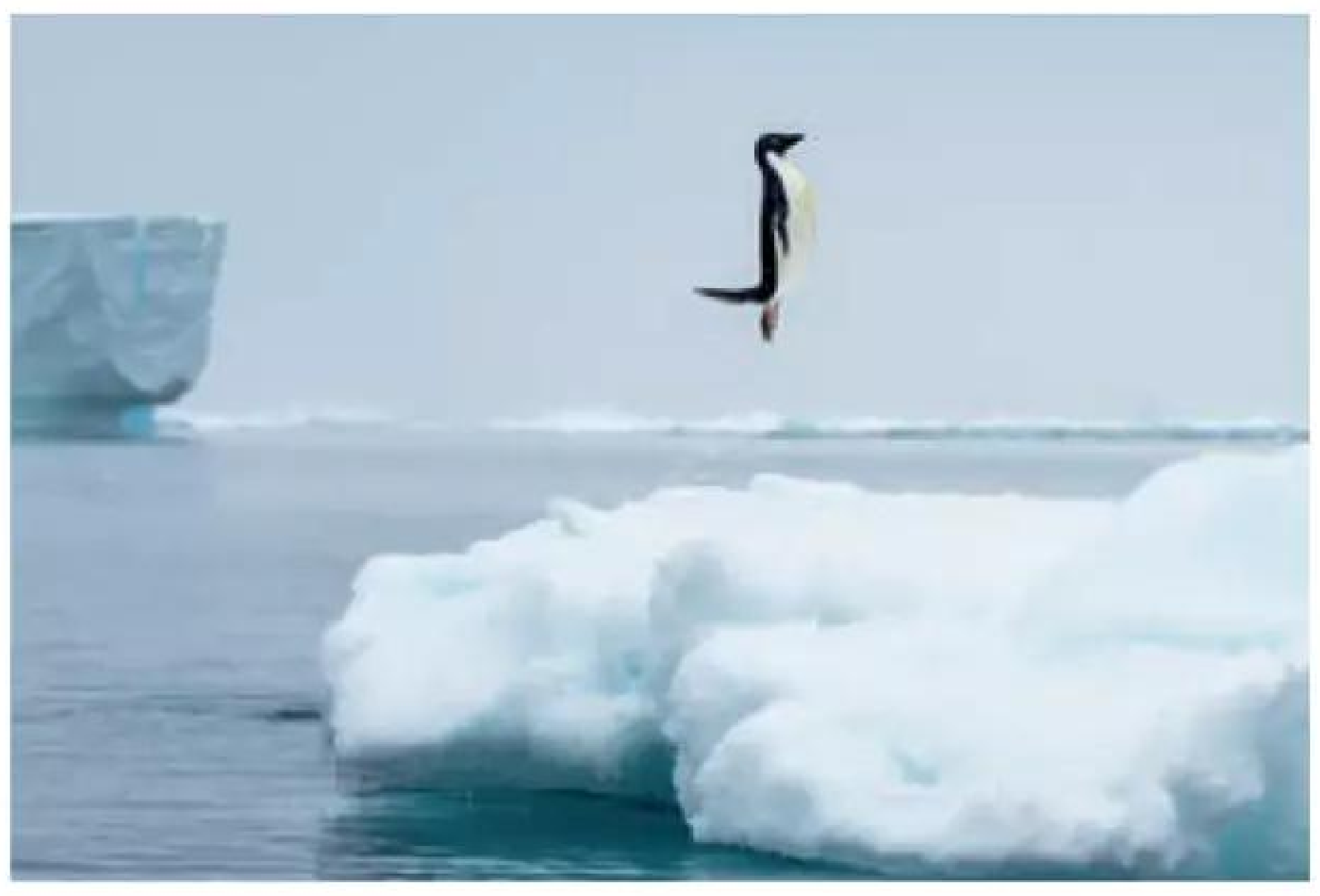
3. TRACY LEES

ENDING



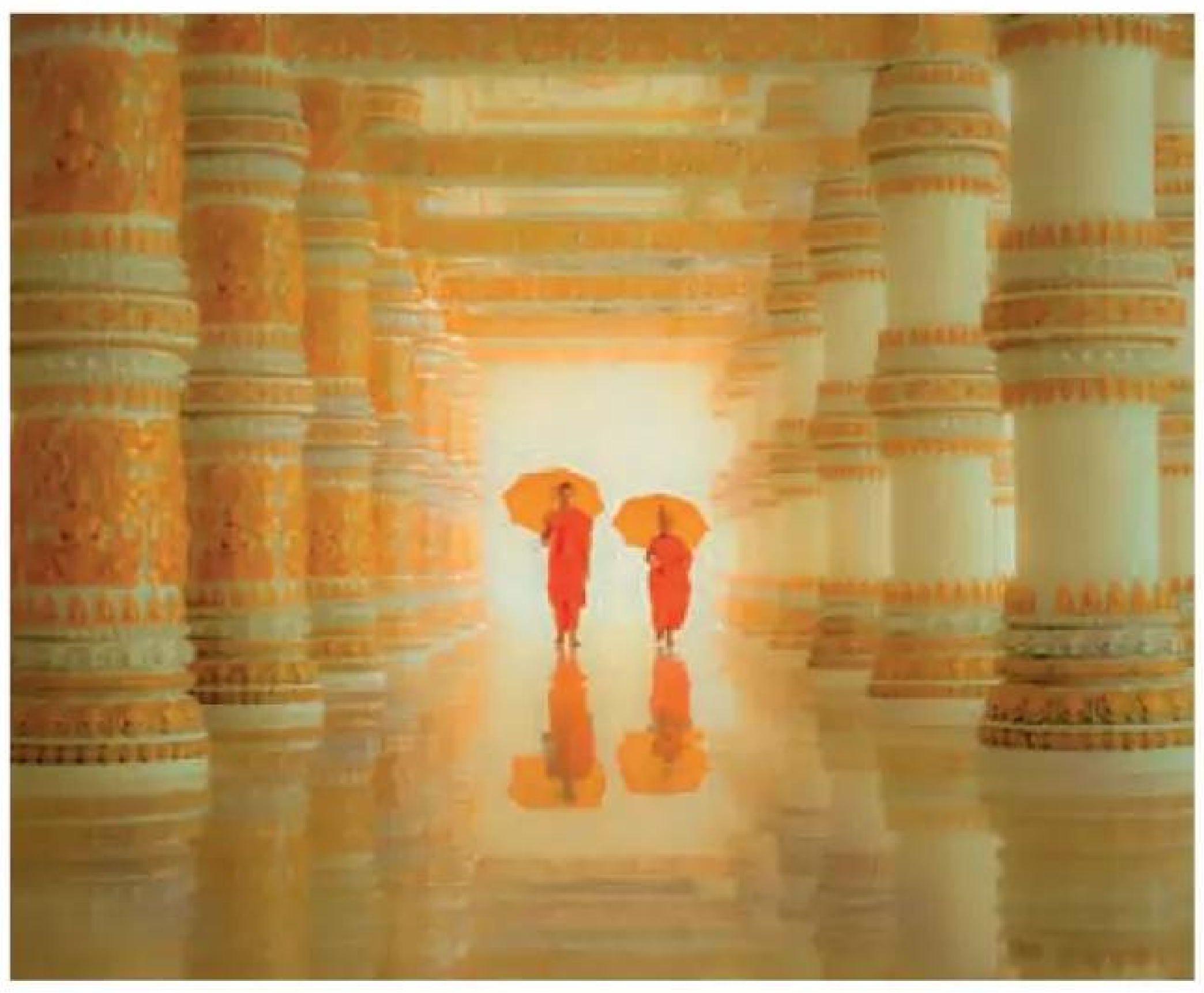
4. MAT BELL

PENGUIN POSE



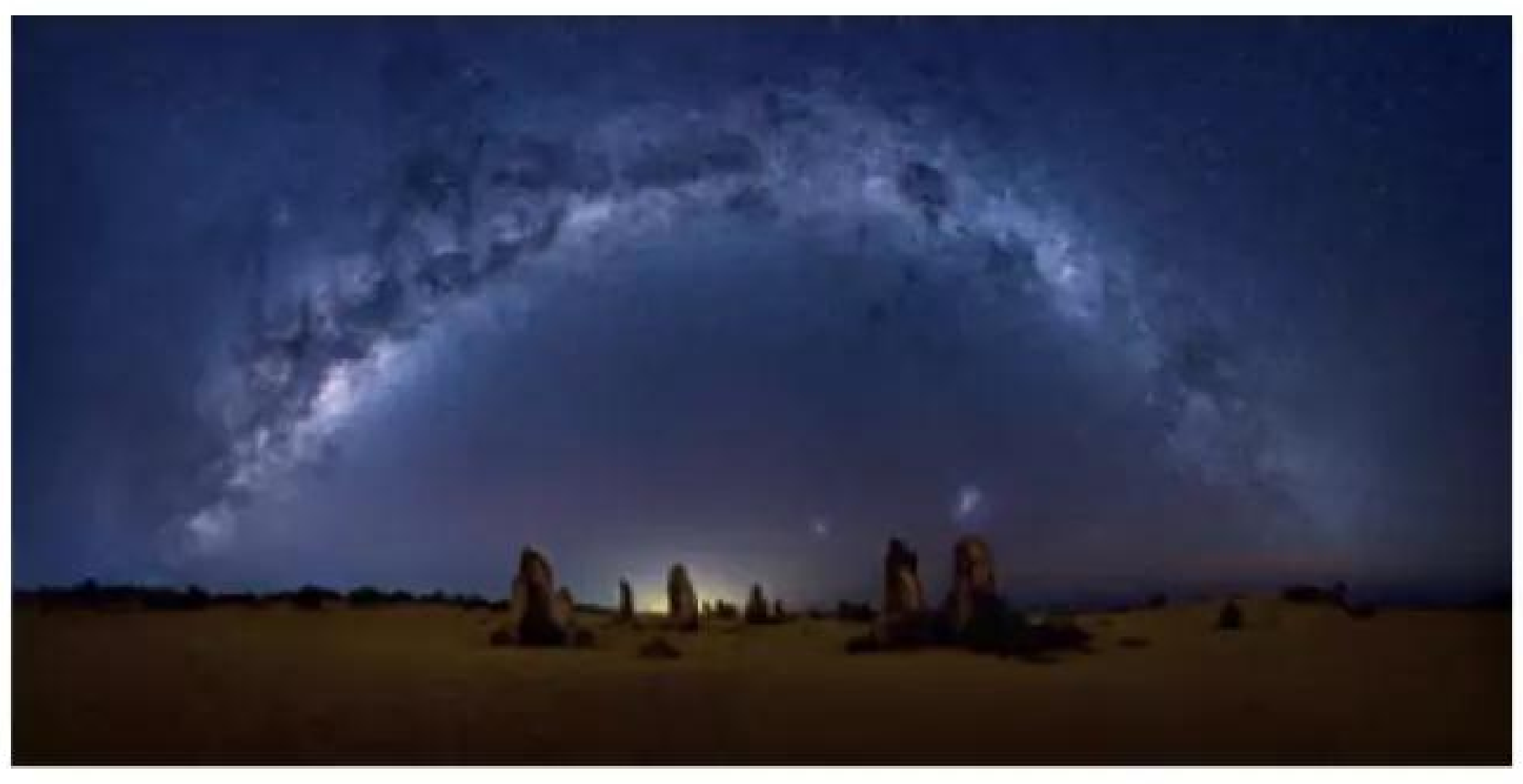
5. BYRON TAN

MONKS OF THE GOLDEN HALL



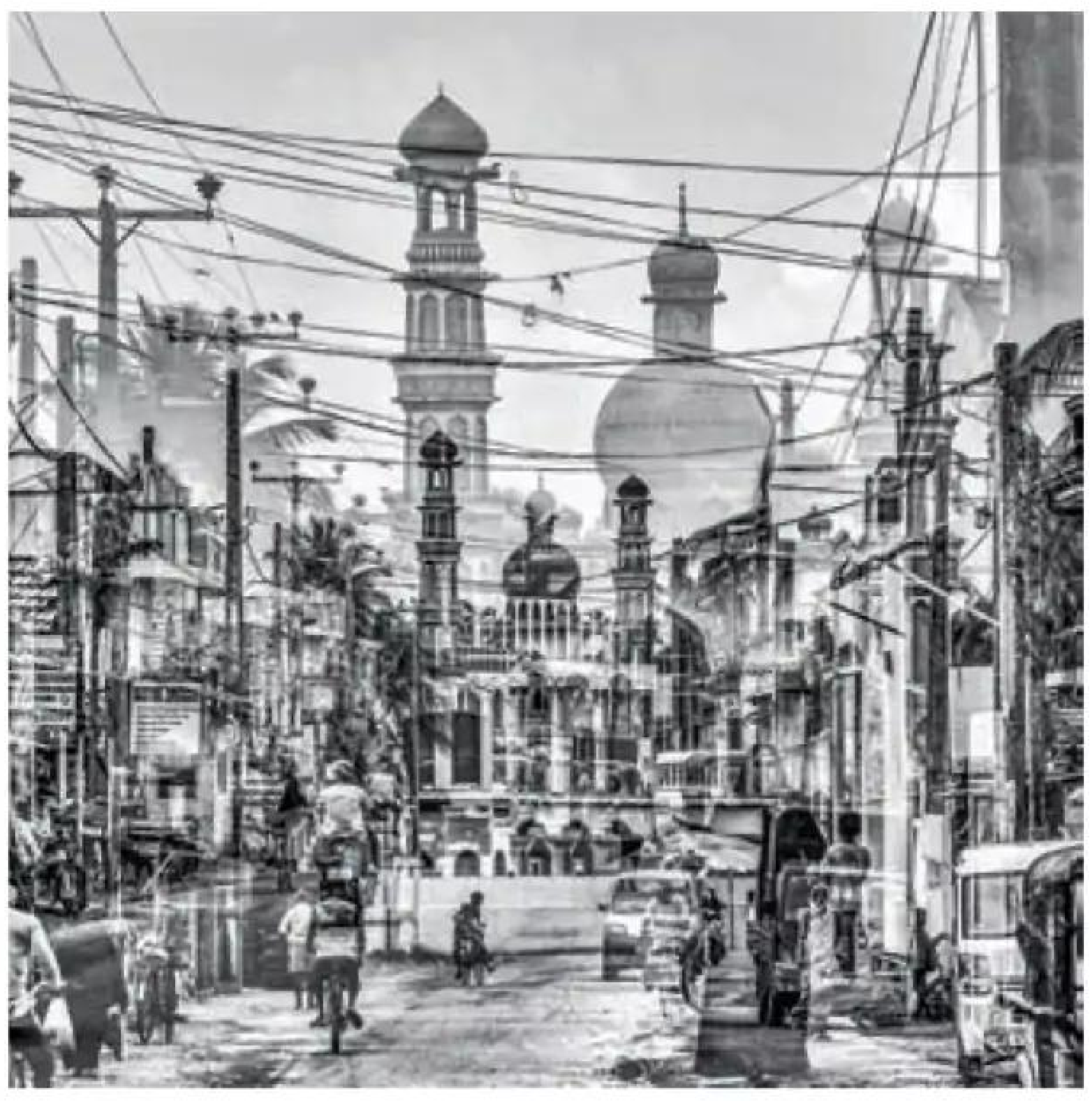
6. WAYNE RILEY

ARCHED BY LIGHT



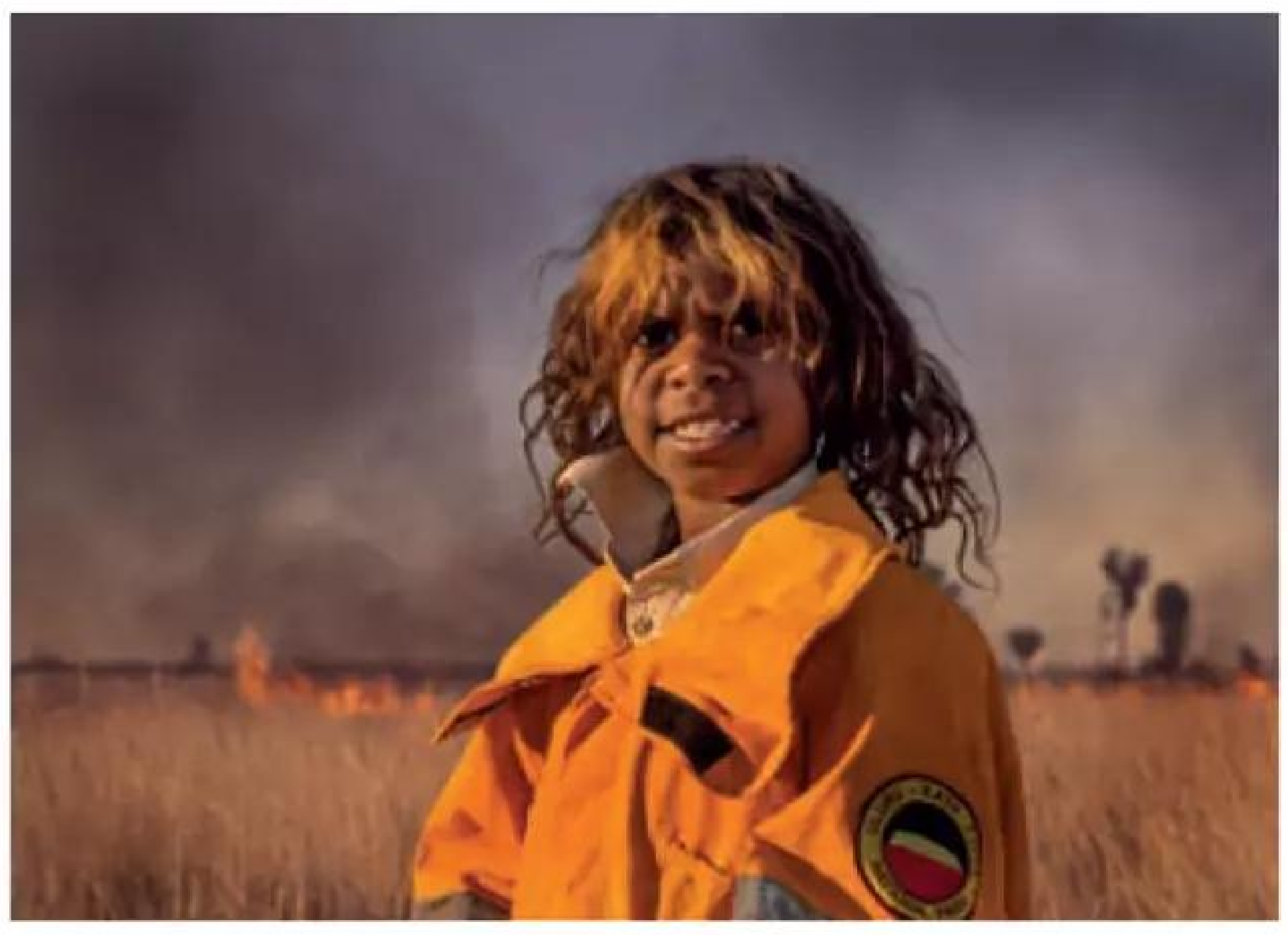
7. GLENDA GORE

SRI LANKAN VIBES



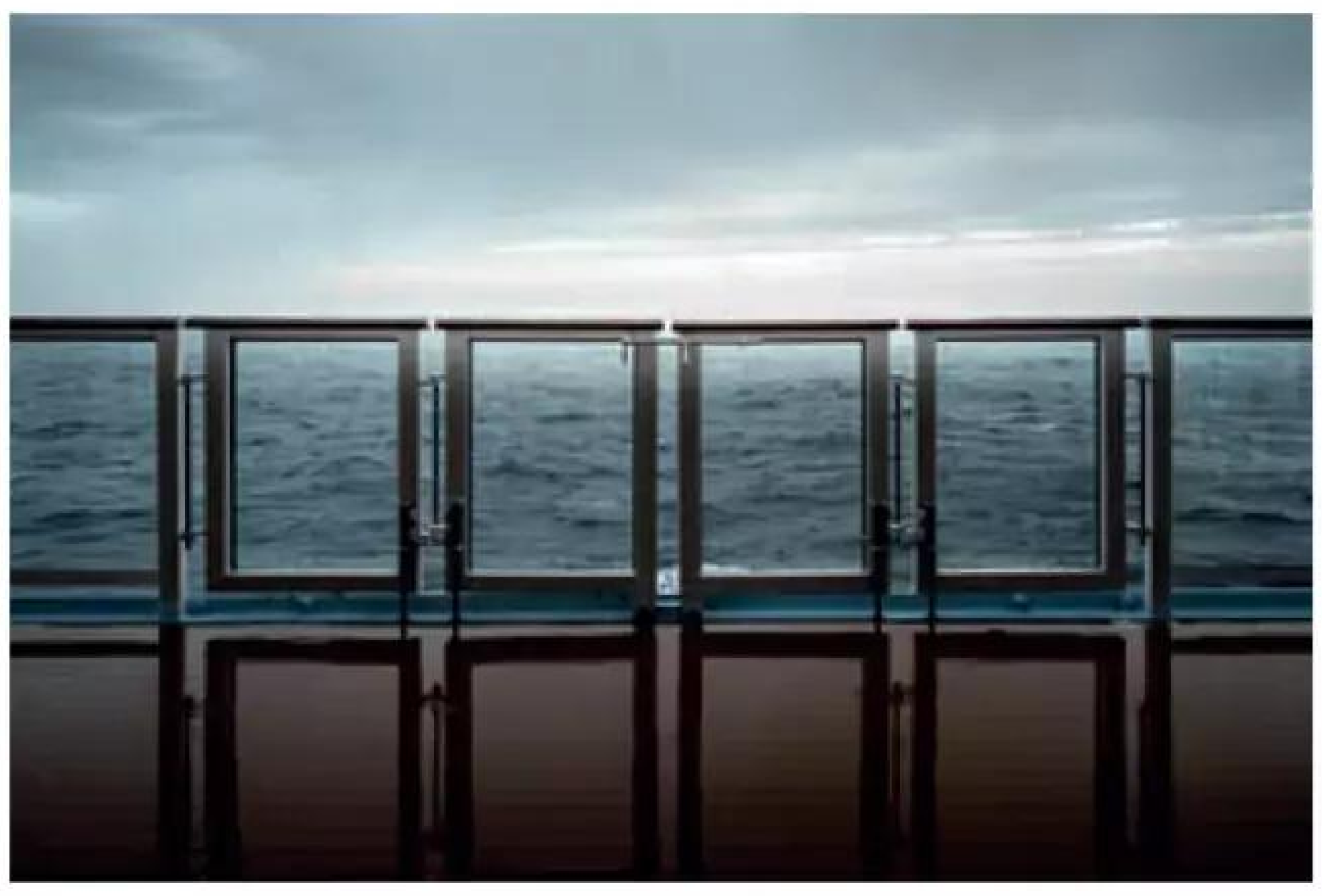
8. NEIL HUMMERSTON

MALIKA ON COUNTRY



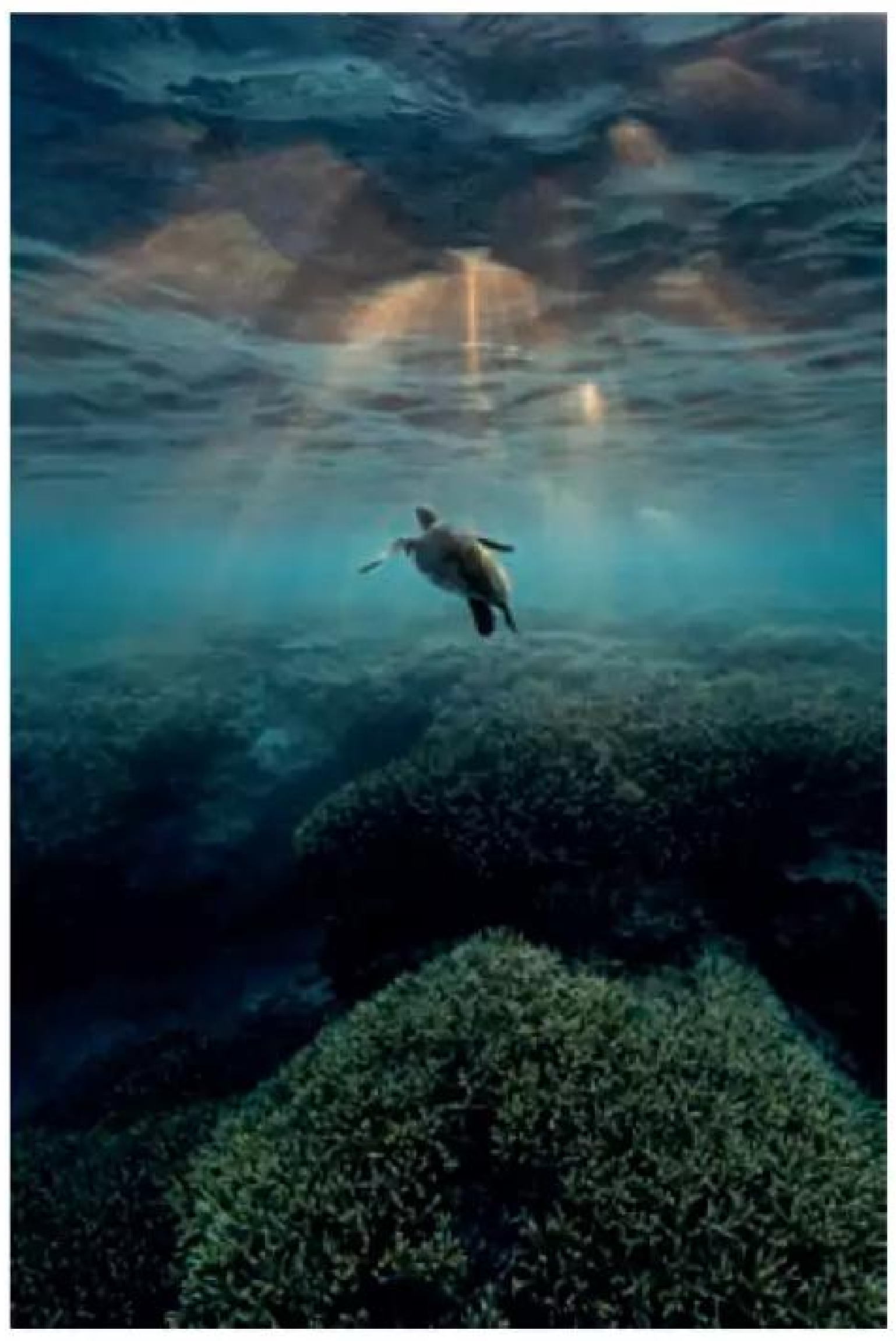
9. ELLIE FEI

CRUISE VISUAL DIARY



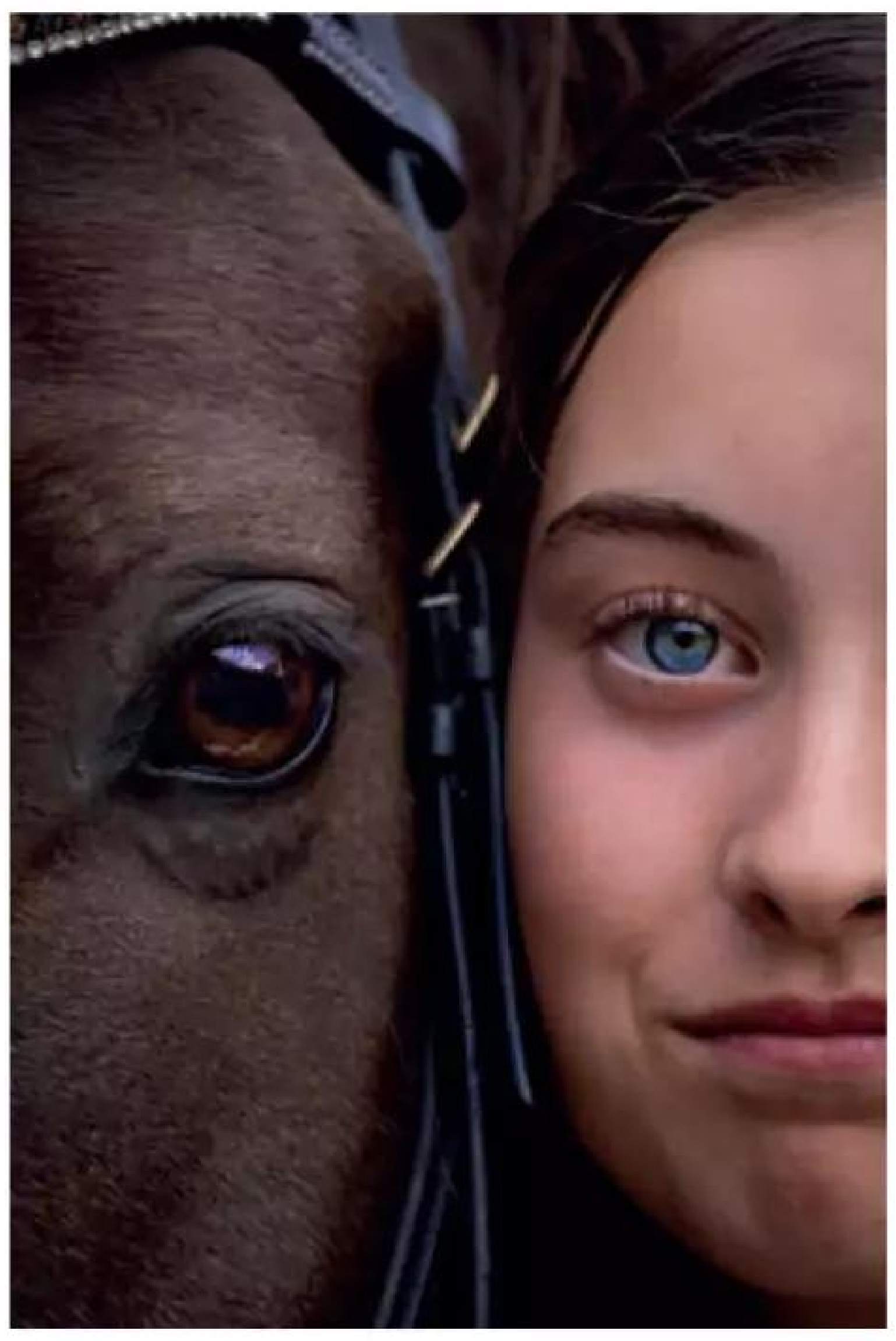
10. TORI SAVAGE

KEEPER OF THE REEF



11. JESS BARRACLOUGH

KINDRED



12. SALLY LOVE
LEVITATING

13. PATRICK TWELLS
BUCK SHED

14. DONNA EDSALL
IT'S IN THE EYES

15. TRACEY NOONAN
CATCHING A WAVE

16. GAANESH PRASAD
BARREL OF COURAGE

17. NEIL KENDALL
ICEBERG SUNSET WATERFALLS

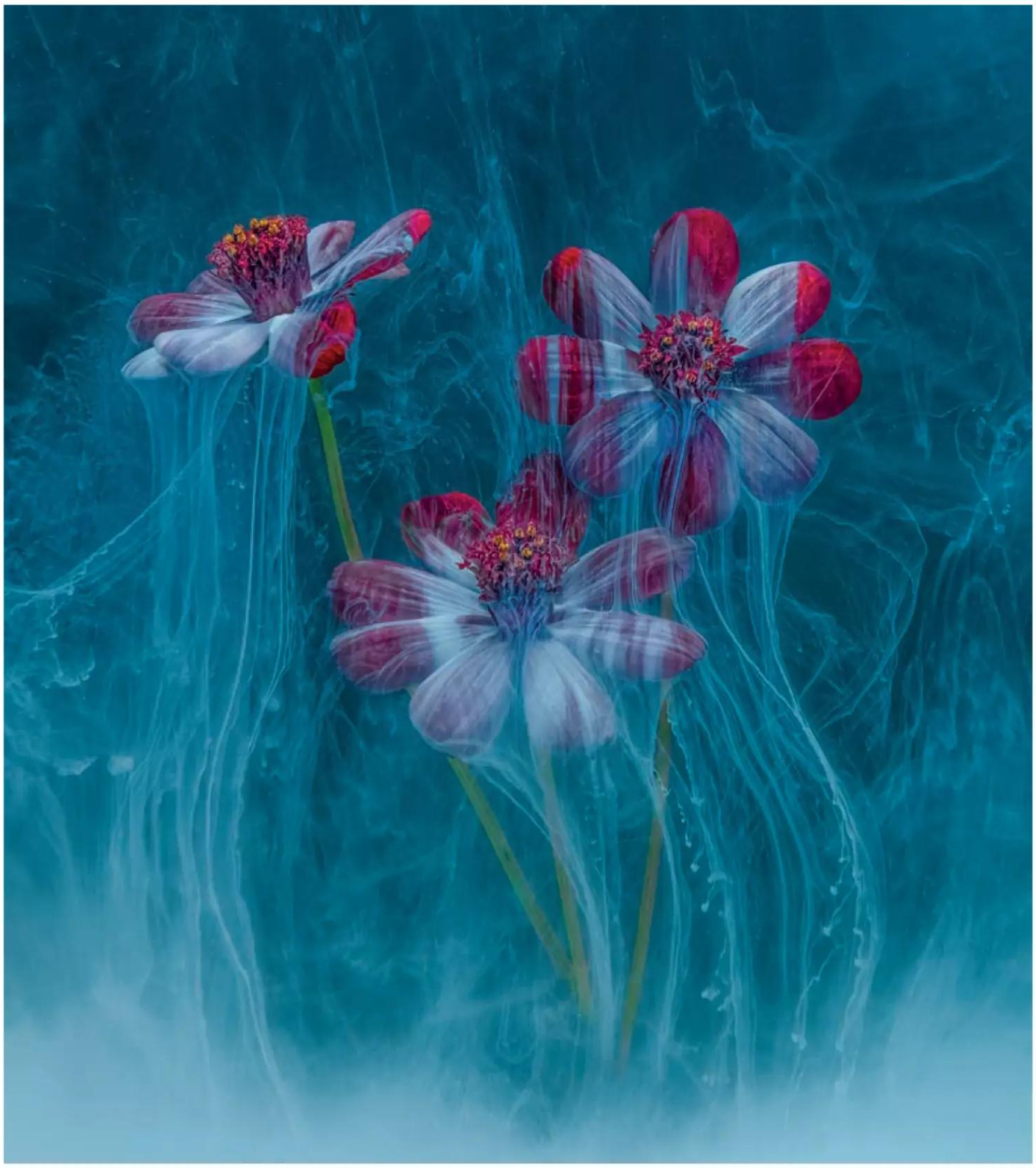
18. PAUL WESTON
A QUESTION OF BALANCE

19. BRADLEY STEPHENSON
FREEDOM SKIMS THE SURFACE

20. MARK KRIEDEMANN
FIRST LIGHT FISHING

WINNER

CREATIVE



SUE JOY

DANCING IN WATER

SUE Joy began her photography journey about fifteen years ago, and it has since become a major part of her life, in all its wonderful forms.

"I enjoy many styles for the sake of variety, though the creative genre remains one of my favourites," she says.

Her Creative category-winning image *Dancing in Water* captivated the judges with its sheer beauty.

Submerged floral photography comes with many considerations, from equipment and lighting to the mediums used and all the small details in between.

"The choice of flowers is also important, as some don't work as well as others," Joy explains.

"I grew the flowers featured in this image specifically for the project. Be prepared for a few failed attempts, but when you finally capture an image you're truly happy with, every bit of effort is worthwhile."

Joy says her motivation for entering the image was simple – submerged floral photography was something she hadn't seen much of before.

"Hopefully others who haven't seen it before, will be in awe as much as I was," she said. For the judges, her unique image stood out as a clear winner, and a credit to her planning and hard work.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

MANDARINE MONTGOMERY: This is a captivating and original take on the Creative genre. The technique is intriguing, adding artistry to an otherwise unremarkable subject. What I love though is how the viewer is drawn into the creative and original scene witnessing the intense crimson tones visually "melting" off the flowers. A whimsical and pleasing piece of floral art, and a deserving winner.

PRIZE: $1,000 cash, a Cura Silk Rope camera strap (valued at $325) Cura Denim Sashiko Cleaning Pouch Set (valued at $165), a Photobookshop HD layflat photobook valued at $289, plus, three Retouch4Me photo retouching apps.

RUNNER-UP
CREATIVE

MELANIE WARNAAR

@mellym.photo

TOWERING WHITE TRUNKS

BASED in the North East Victorian border town of Albury/Wodonga, Melanie Warnaar works in steel sales, but her true passion lives behind the camera.

"I discovered photography about three years ago and instantly fell in love with it," she says. "Since then, I've dedicated myself to learning everything I can, drawing inspiration from photographers and artists, attending workshops, reading, experimenting, and continually developing my creativity."

For her runner-up image *Towering White Trunks*, she turned her lens to the vibrant transformation of the once-contaminated Urunga Wetlands, now a thriving wildlife habitat.

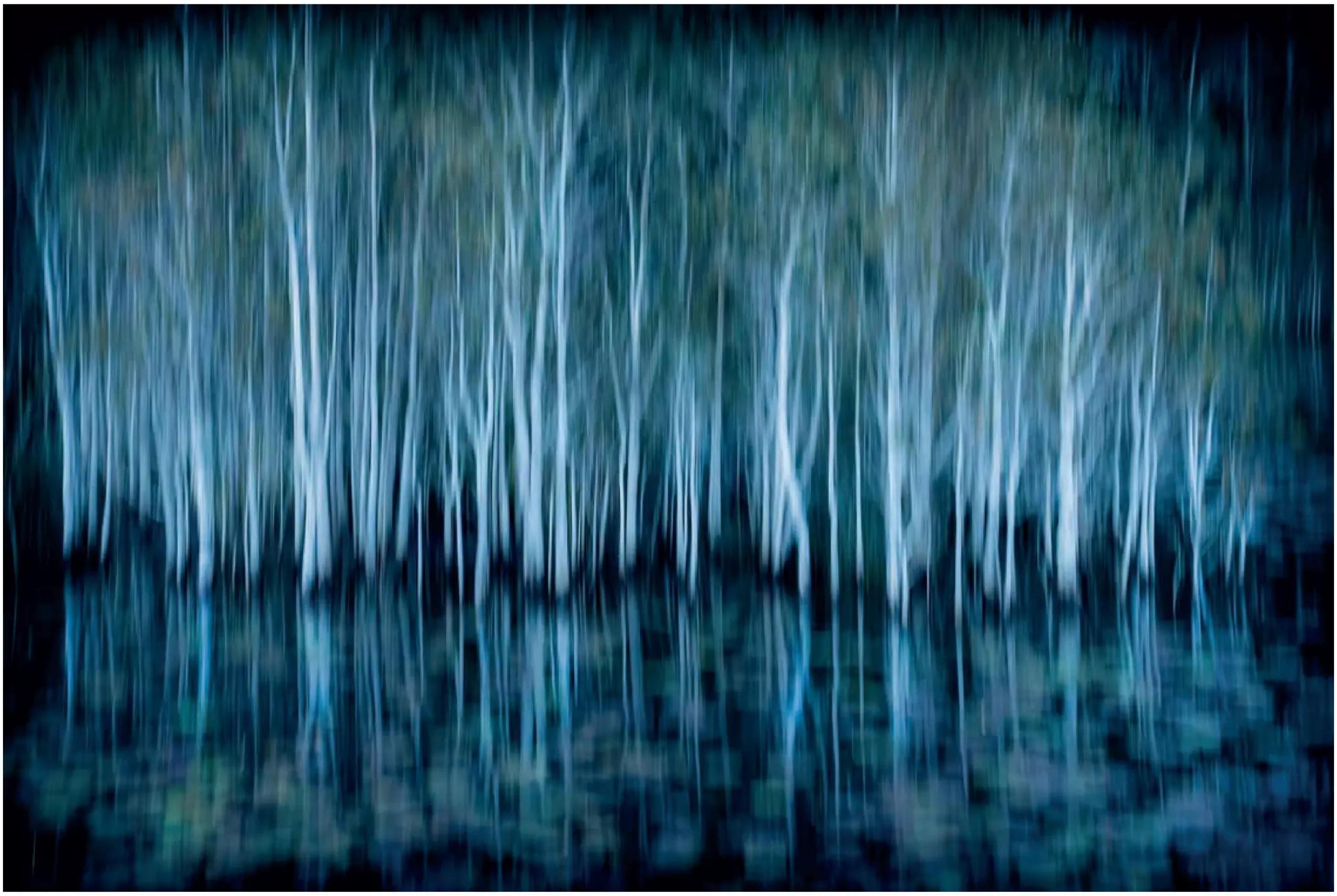
"I was drawn to the slender paperbark trunks and their reflections dancing among green lilies during the tranquil blue hour," she says.

"I experimented with intentional camera movement to convey what I felt: the harmony of renewal and nature's resilience. I hope viewers can sense the quiet strength and serenity this place embodies."

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

SALLY BROWNBILL: It takes real courage to make an image like this, especially as an emerging or amateur photographer. Having the confidence and vision to embrace blur, and to execute it with such a beautifully controlled colour palette, is truly wonderful to see. This combination of intention, creativity, and restraint is exactly why I selected this image.

PRIZE: $200 Ted's Cameras voucher.



FINALISTS

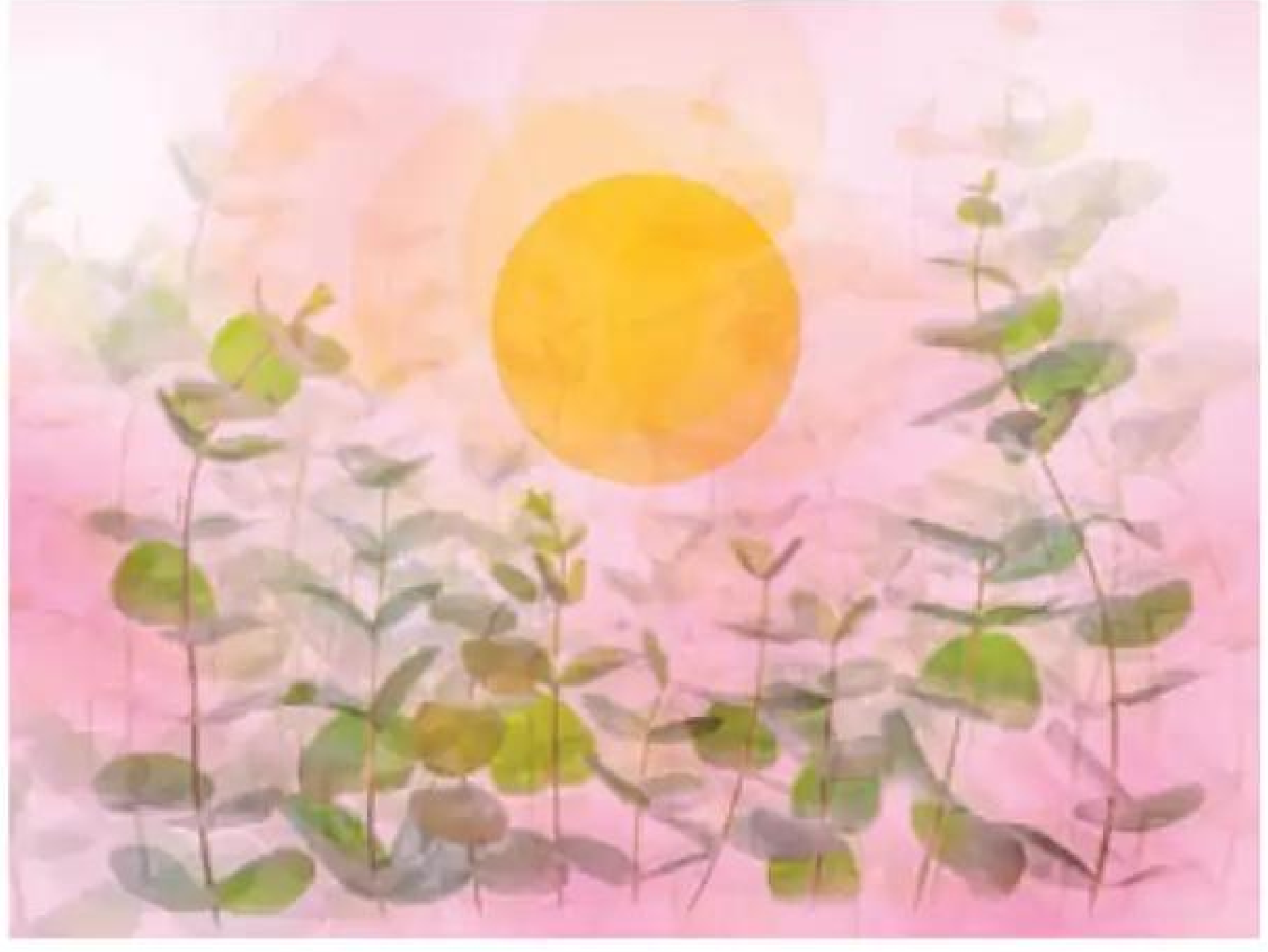
CREATIVE

3. SHAUN LIPTAK

TAKE A SEAT

4. LESLEY BRETHERTON

EUCALYPTUS AND PAPER

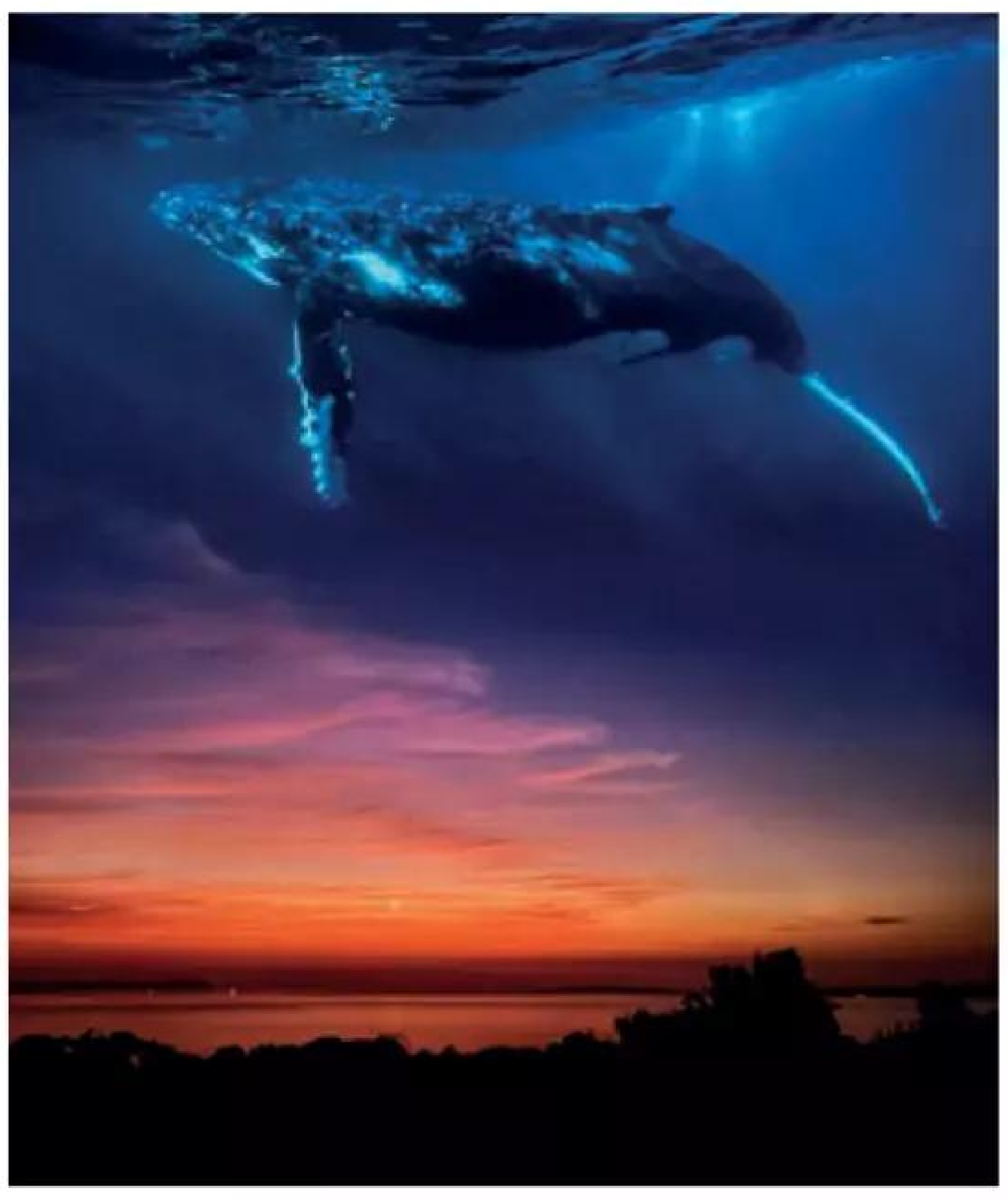


5. ALEX HOUGHTON

WING AND A PRAY

6. RHIANNON COCHRANE

HOME



7. GLENDA GORE

THE CHAOS OF INDIA

8. ANDRZEJ STILLER

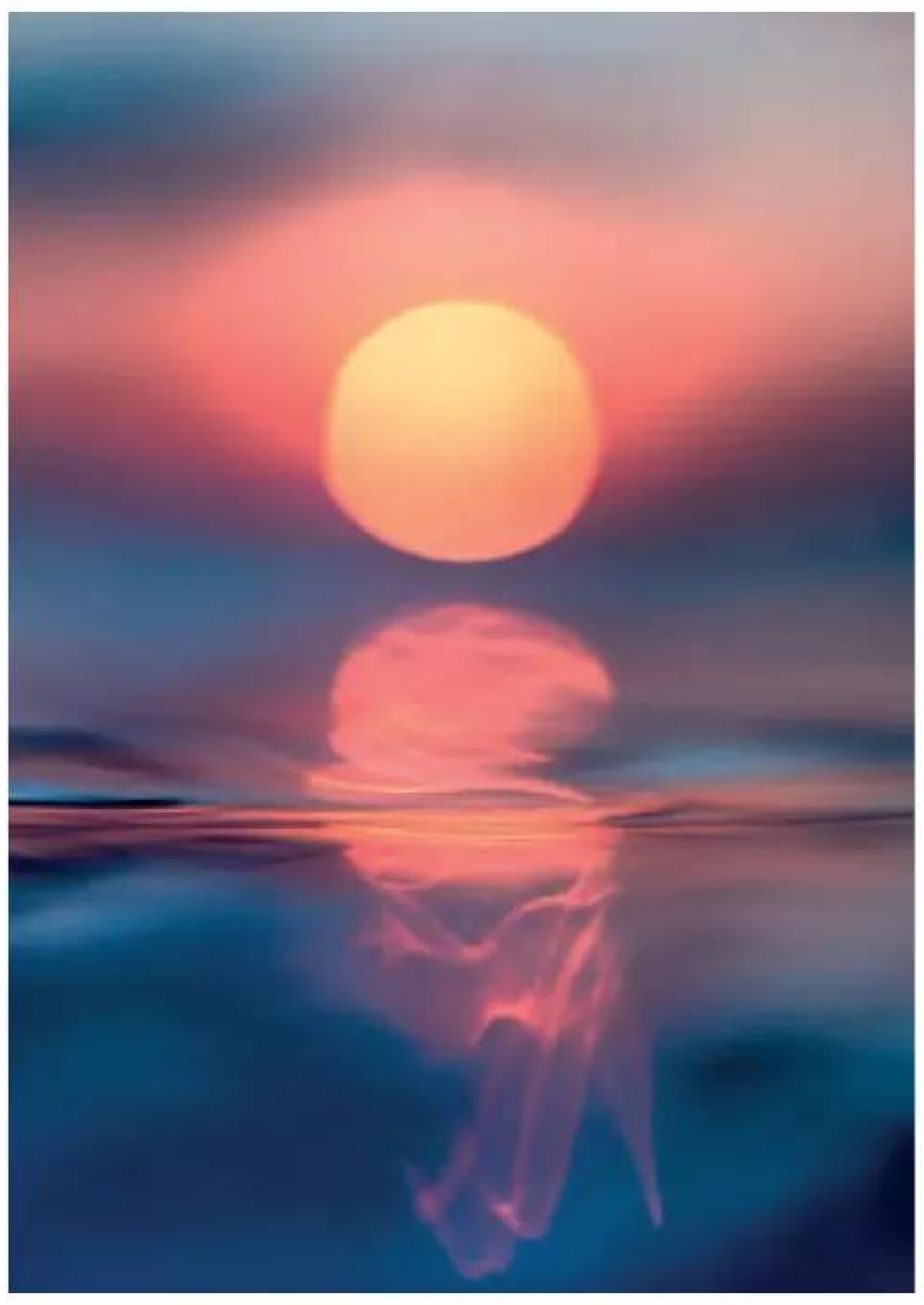
FLOWER'S STORY

9. CHRISTINE BAIRSTOW

UNDERWATER FLORAL-CAMELLIA

10. JEN WILLIAMS

THE WAY YOU MAKE ME FEEL

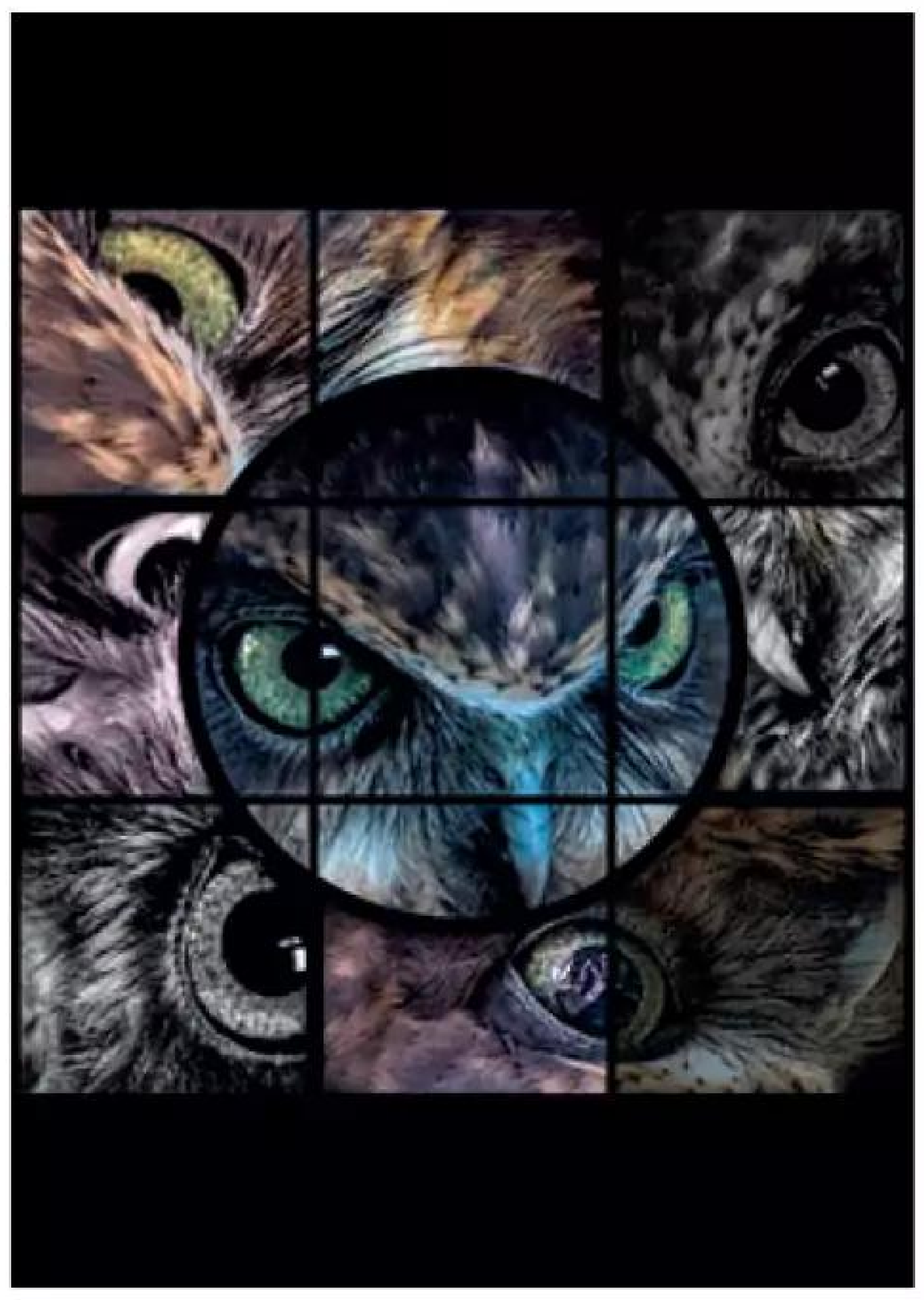


11. KIM BOHNING

DEEP LINES

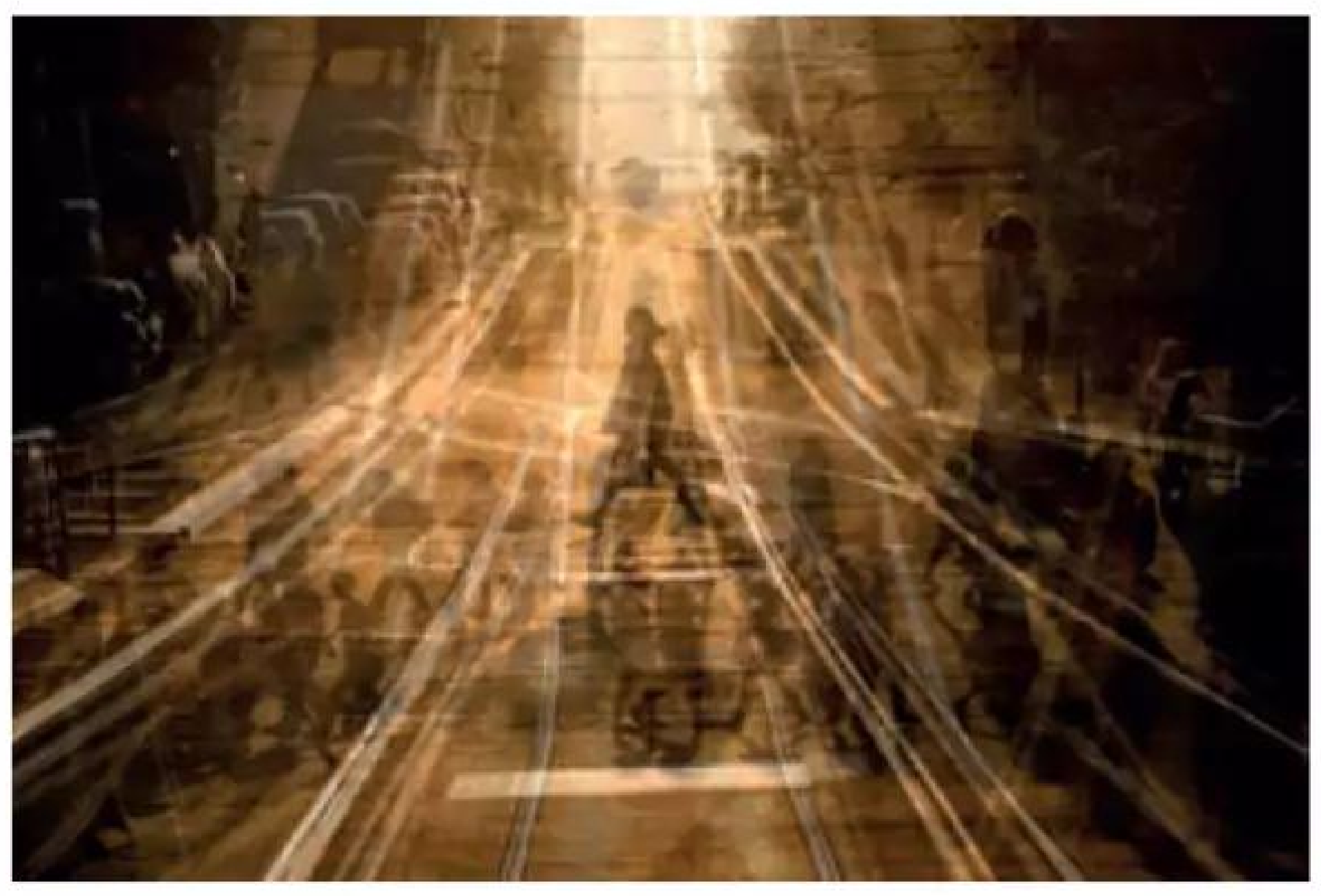
12. JODINE WAGHORN

FRAGMENTS OF FOCUS



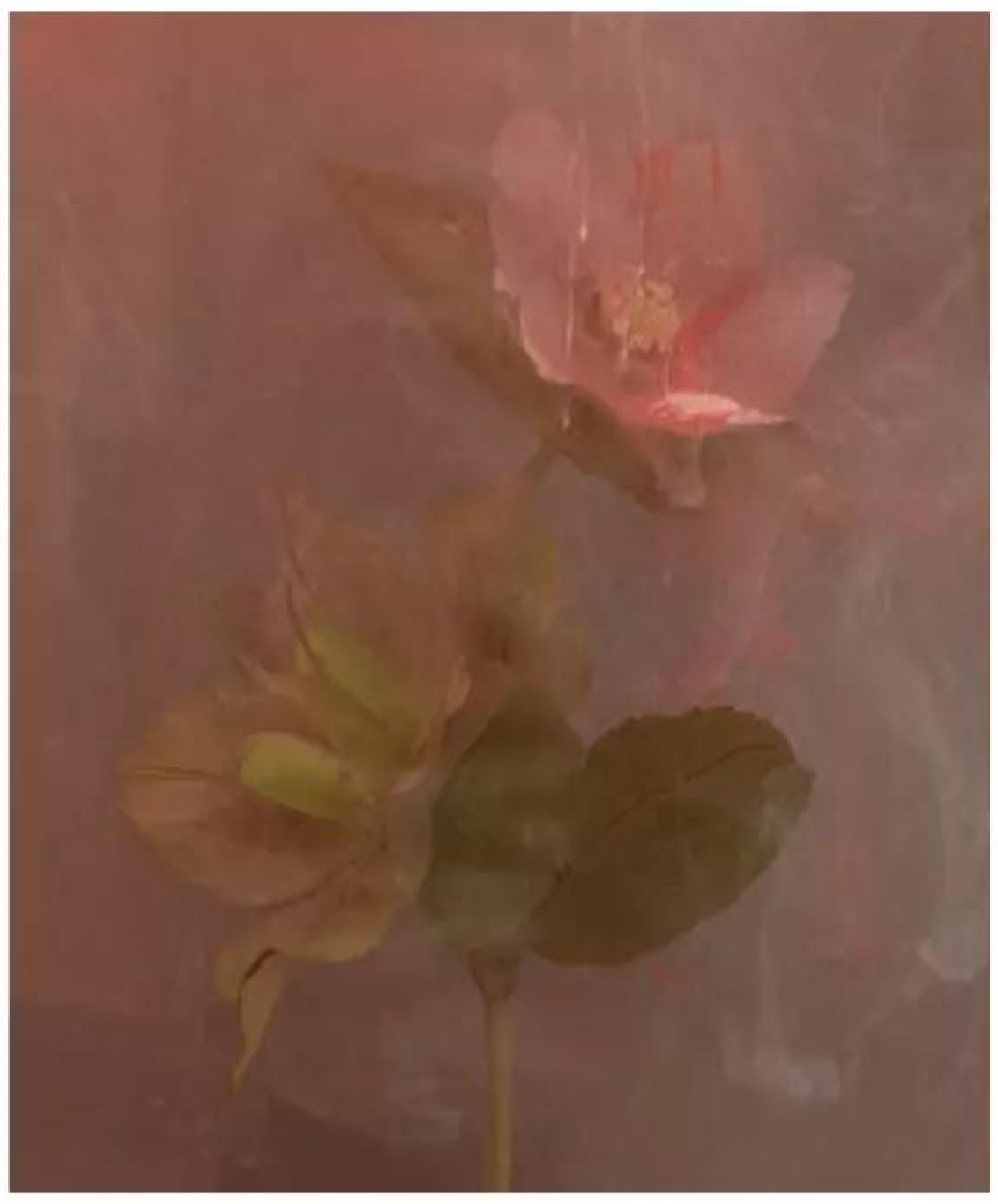
13. CLEMENT CHUA

MELBOURNE SOUL



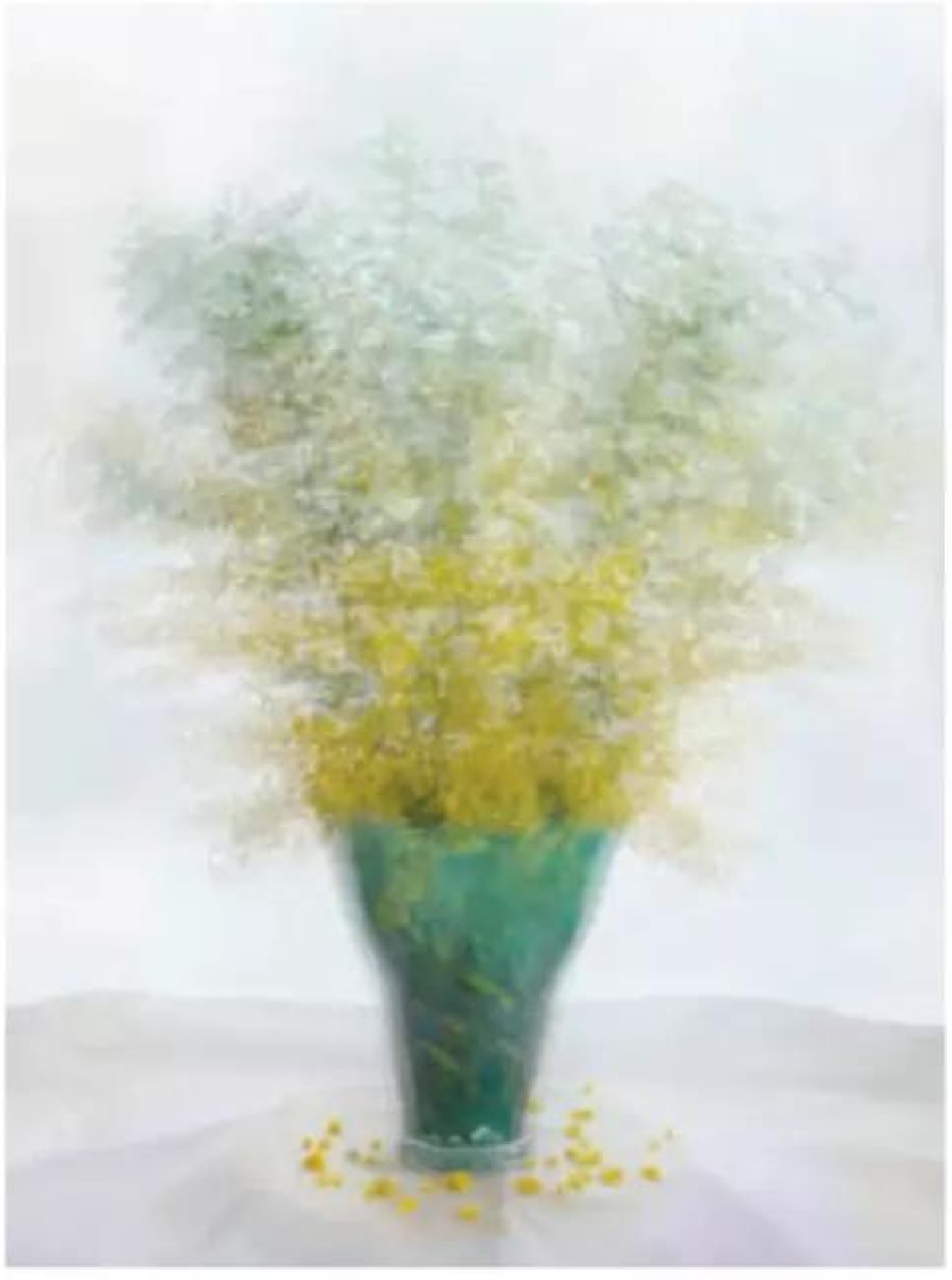
14. MELINDA CRAIK

FLEETING BLOOM



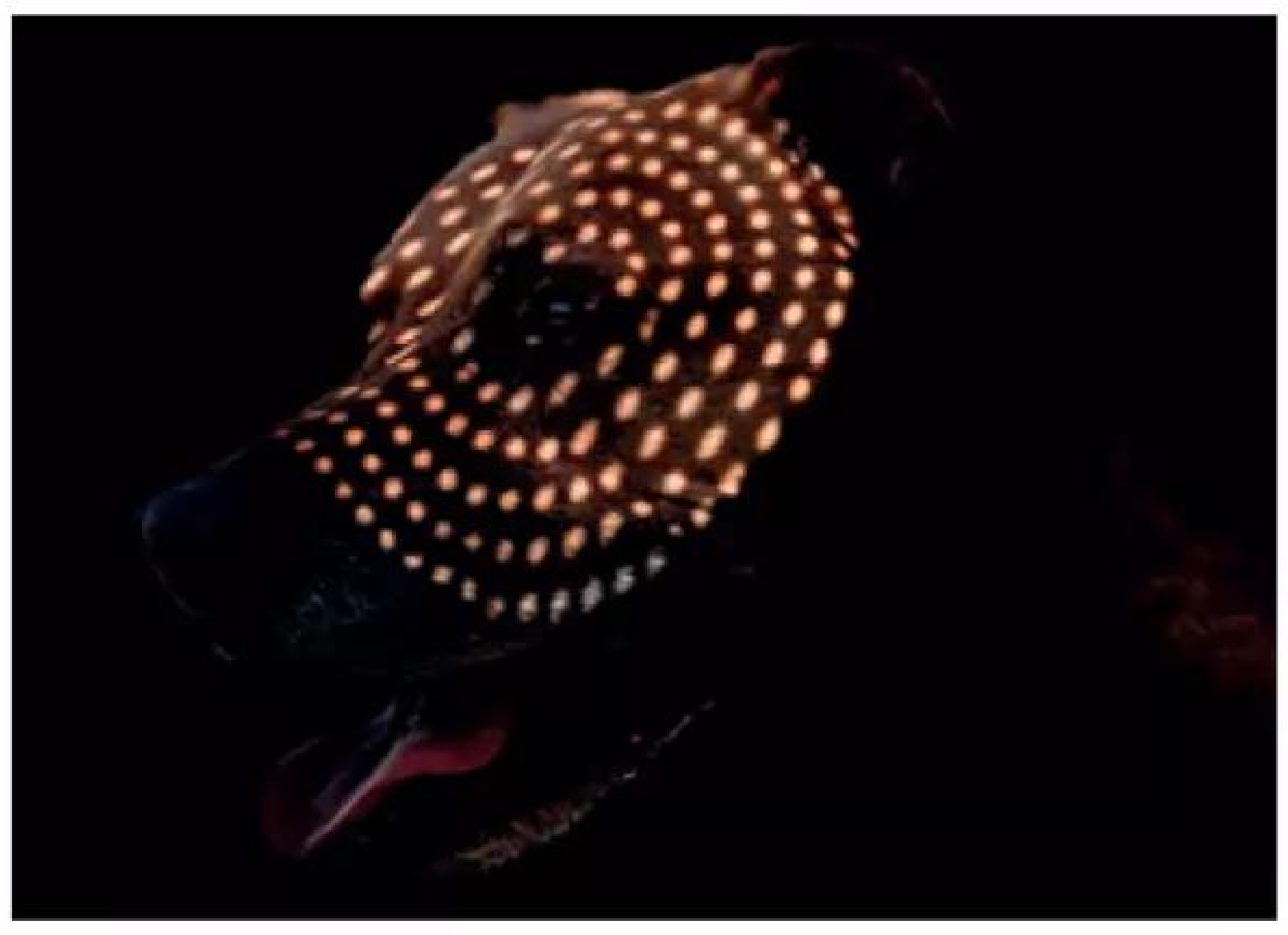
15. DINY JONES

WATTLE SPRAY



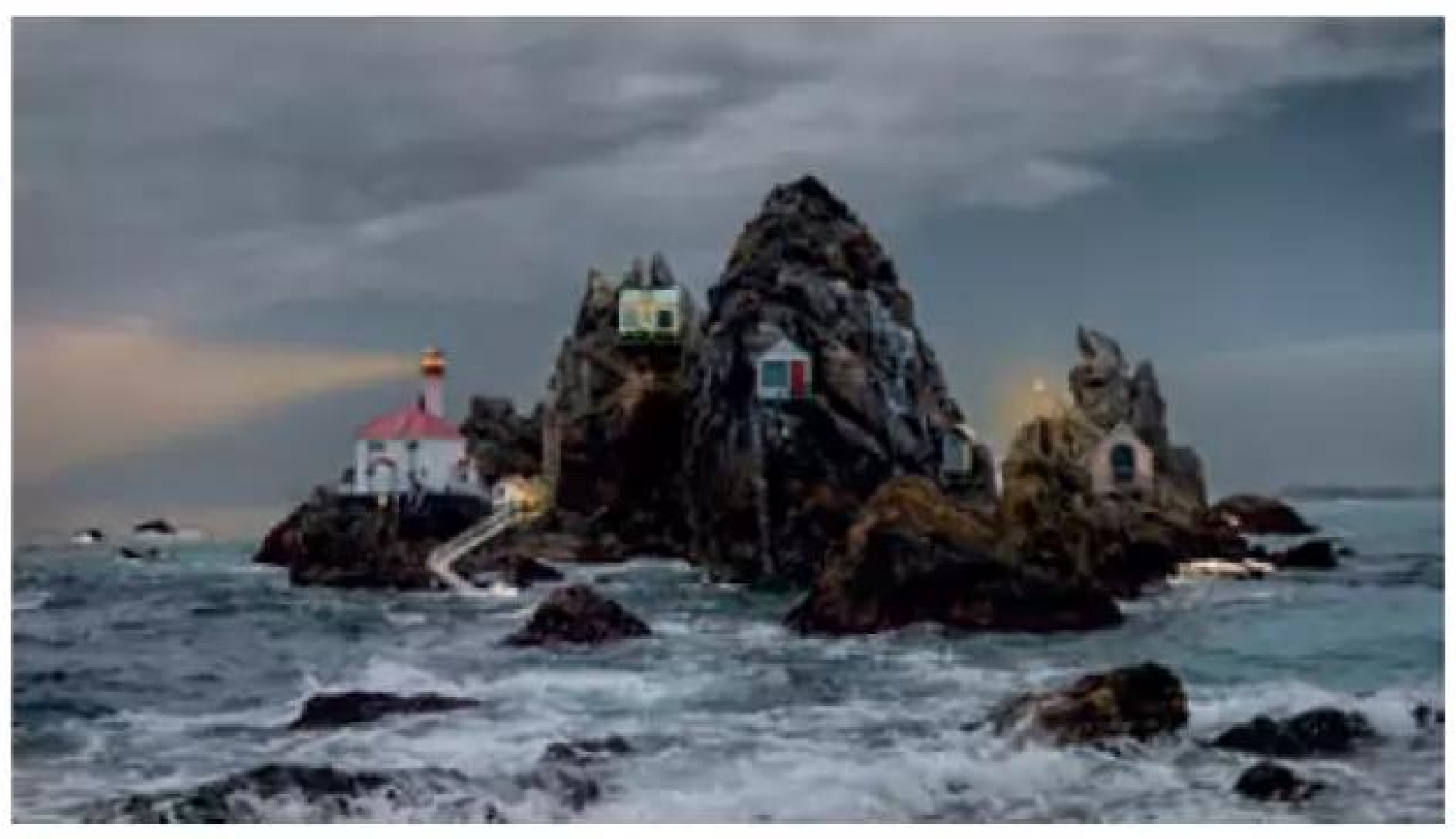
16. ESTHER KRAMER

SPOTS OF SHADOW



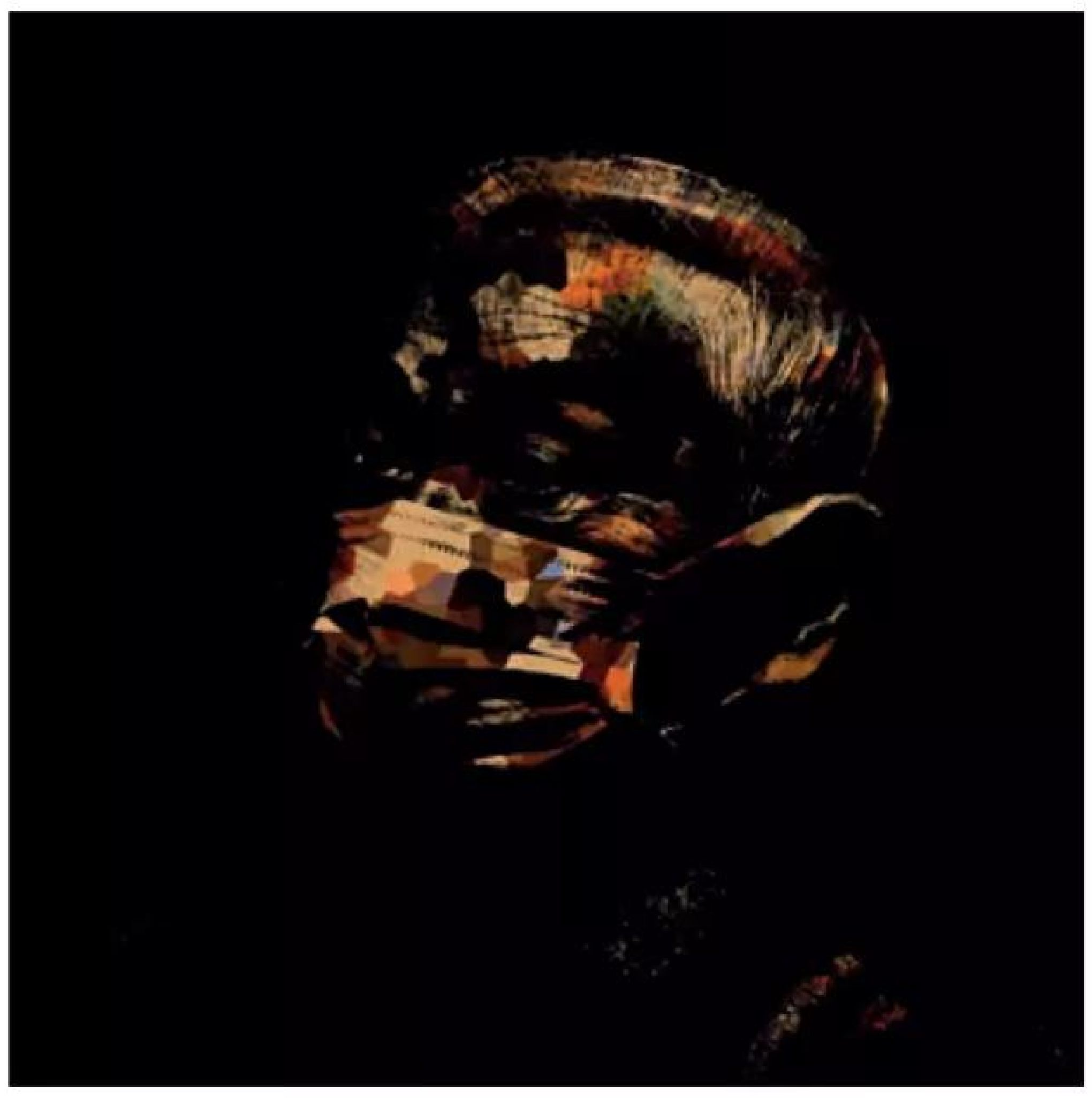
17. FIONA CARTER

SEA CHANGE



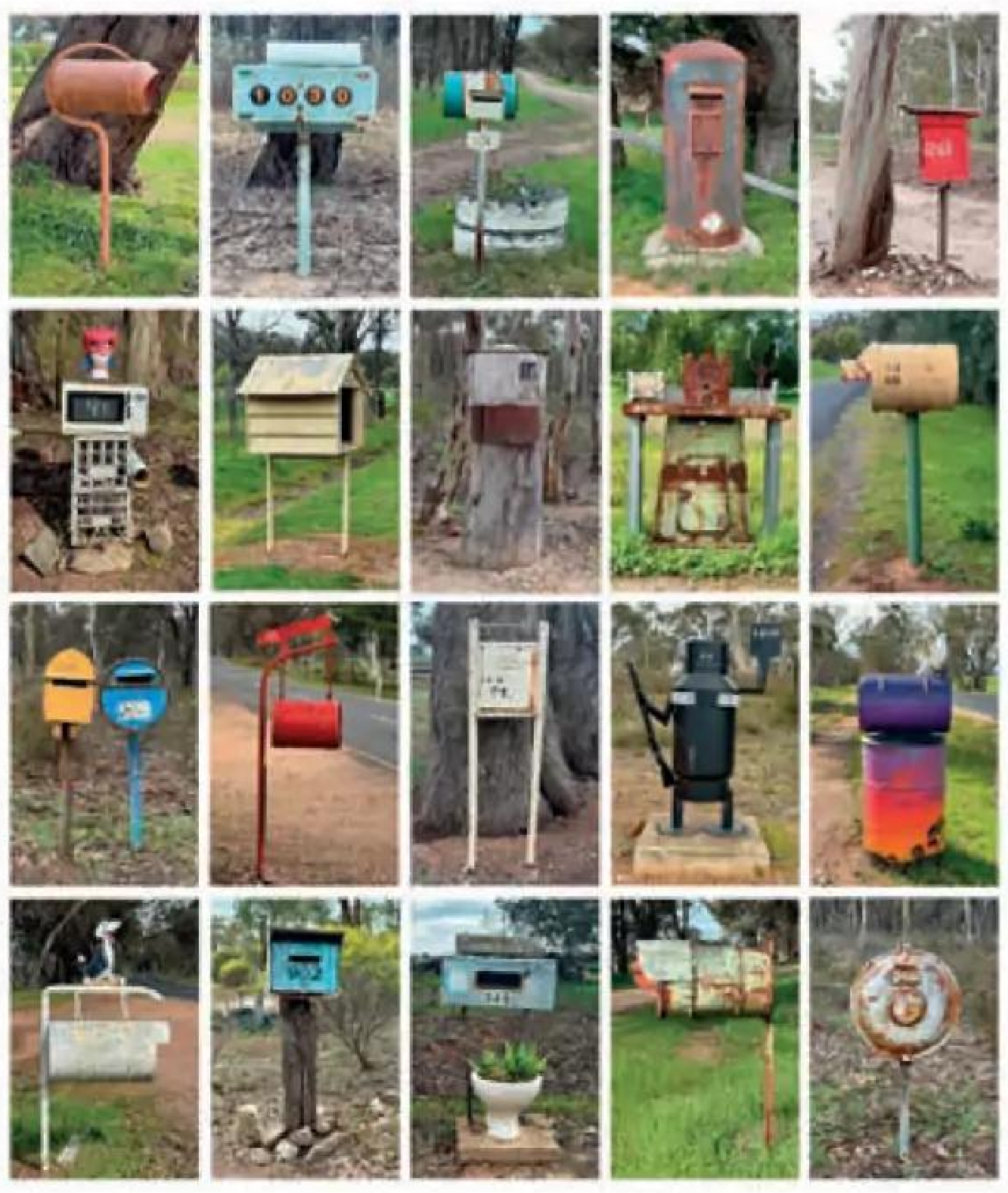
18. GRAEME GORDON

OLD



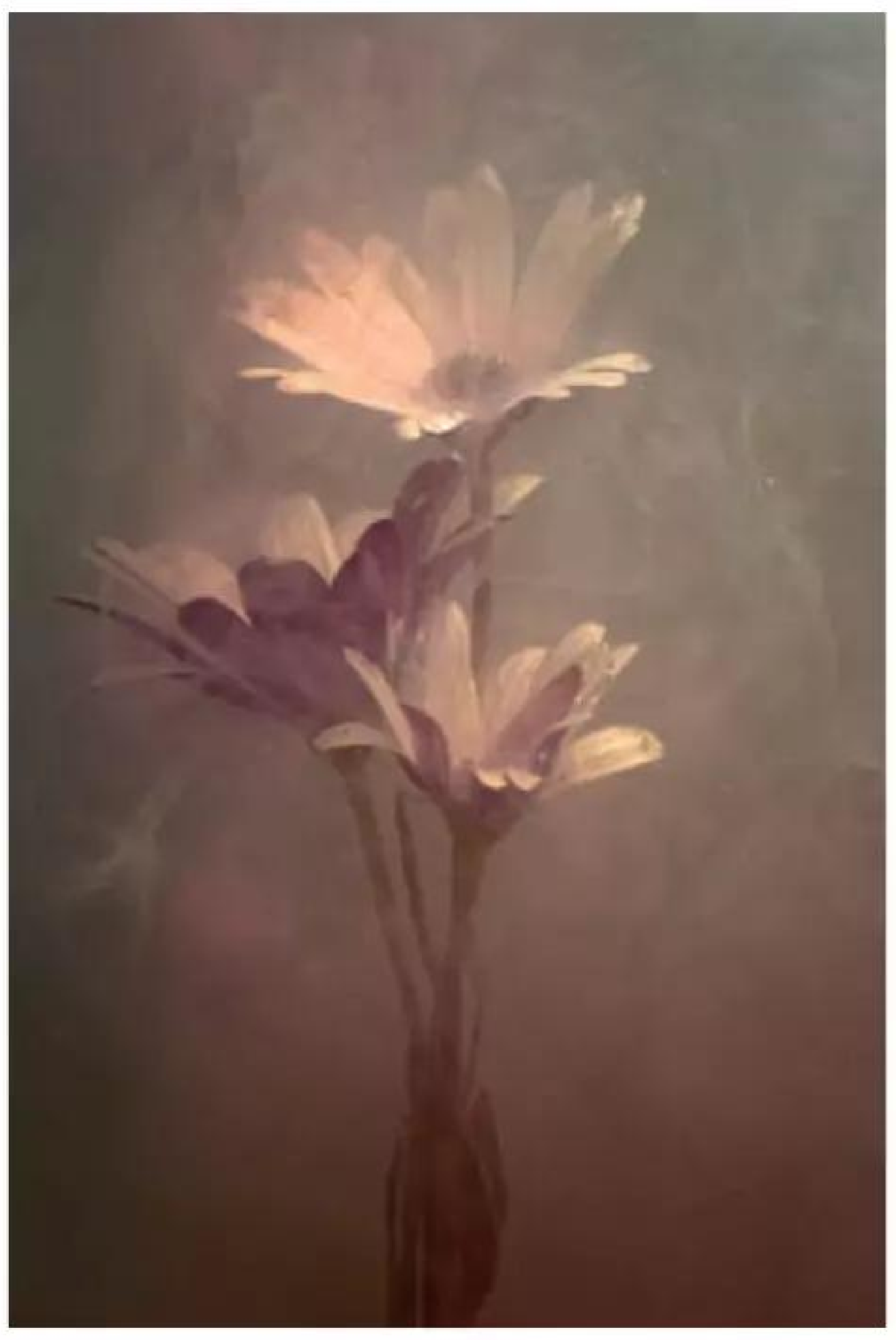
19. BRONWYN SILVER

RURAL LETTERBOXES



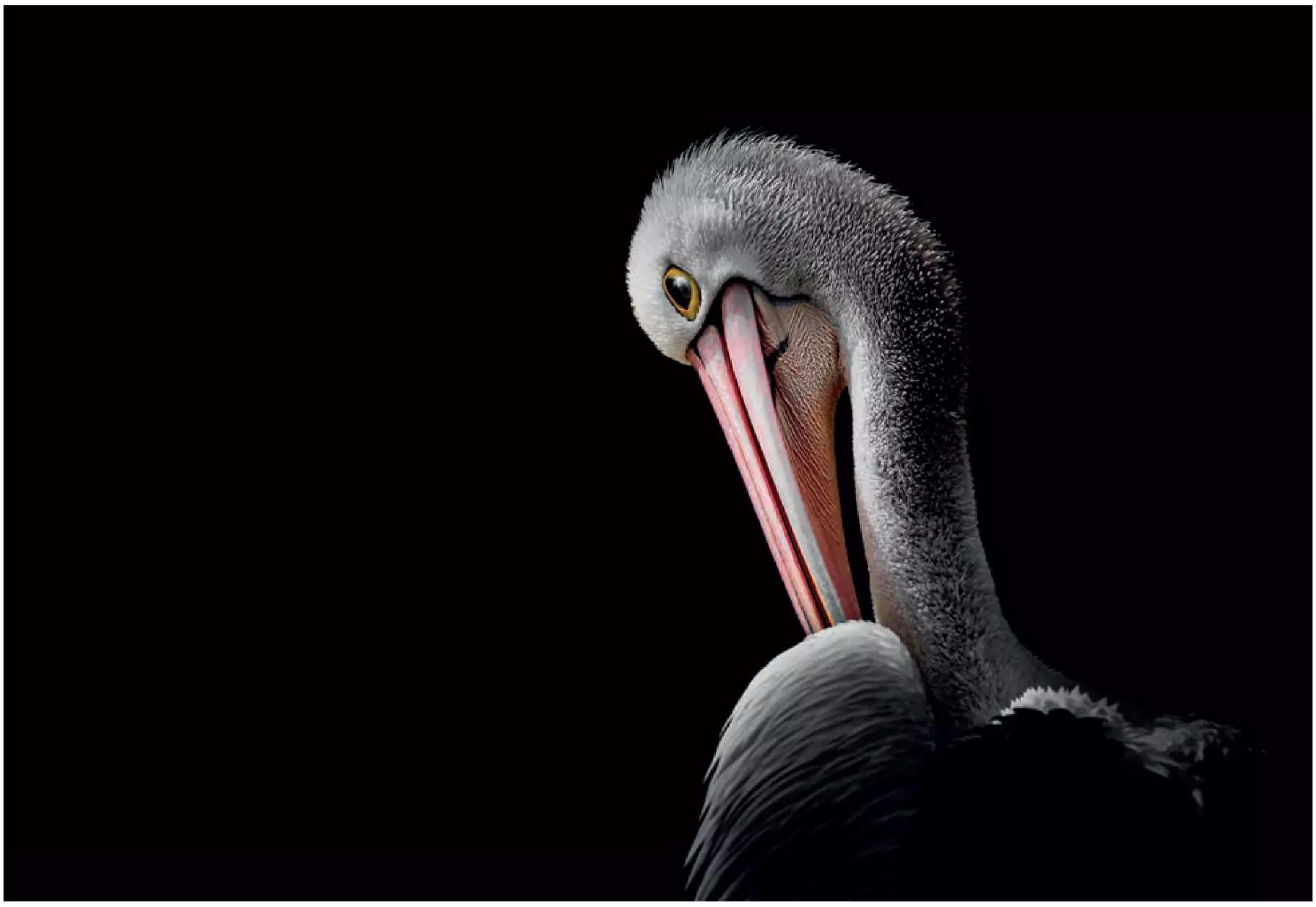
20. DIANNE ENGLISH

DAISIES DIVINE



WINNER

JUNIOR



AARYAN DHAKAL

SILENT GRACE

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD Alice Springs photographer Aaryan Dhakal has been shooting for nearly four years and credits the local landscapes and wildlife with shaping much of his work.

"Photography began as a passing curiosity but quickly became a way to observe and preserve moments of stillness and character," he says.

His Junior category-winning image, *Silent Grace*, was inspired by an older pelican portrait that he felt "never quite felt complete".

"I was drawn to the balance of fragility and poise in these birds, but the challenge was in the light. I waited for that fleeting moment when the sun revealed every texture in the feathers. Among all the frames I captured, this one stood apart," he recalls.

"I chose *Silent Grace* as a title because it best represents the balance I try to capture in my work – the meeting point between precision and emotion. This image felt honest to my process: patient, deliberate, and quietly expressive."

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

ANTHONY MCKEE: Aaryan Dhakal's portrait of a pelican was the clear winner in the Junior section. Gorgeous side lighting against a solid black background created the setting, and when this bird turned left to preen under its wing, Aaryan was ready to capture the moment. And while many photographers might have been tempted to shoot a tight vertical image, or crop this frame, Aaryan has let that black negative space to the left of frame help create a beautiful balance. Well done, and well deserved.

PRIZE: 1,000 cash, a Photobookshop HD layflat photobook valued at $289, plus three Retouch4Me photo retouching apps.

RUNNER-UP

JUNIOR

WILLIAM HADDRILL

SWORD FIGHT

FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD Western Australian photographer William Haddrill first discovered his passion when he picked up his grandfather's camera.

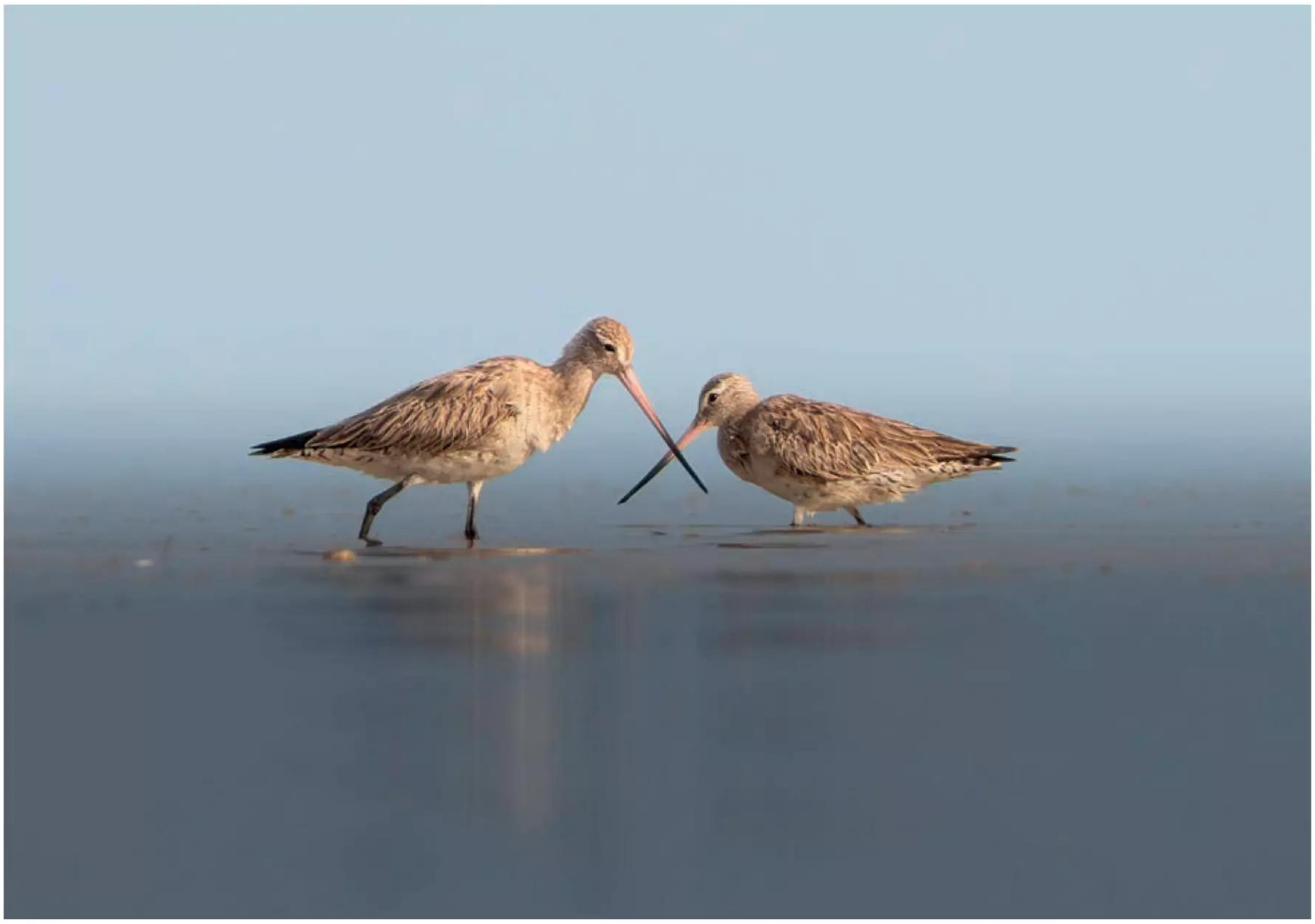
"I've always been interested in birds and wildlife, but I fell in love with photographing them and saved up to buy my own camera," he says.

"I really enjoy capturing their behaviour and freezing a specific moment in time. I took this photo while on holiday in Shark Bay and love how it shows a moment you would normally never notice if you were just observing them. It was definitely worth getting a bit wet and sandy to capture this shot."

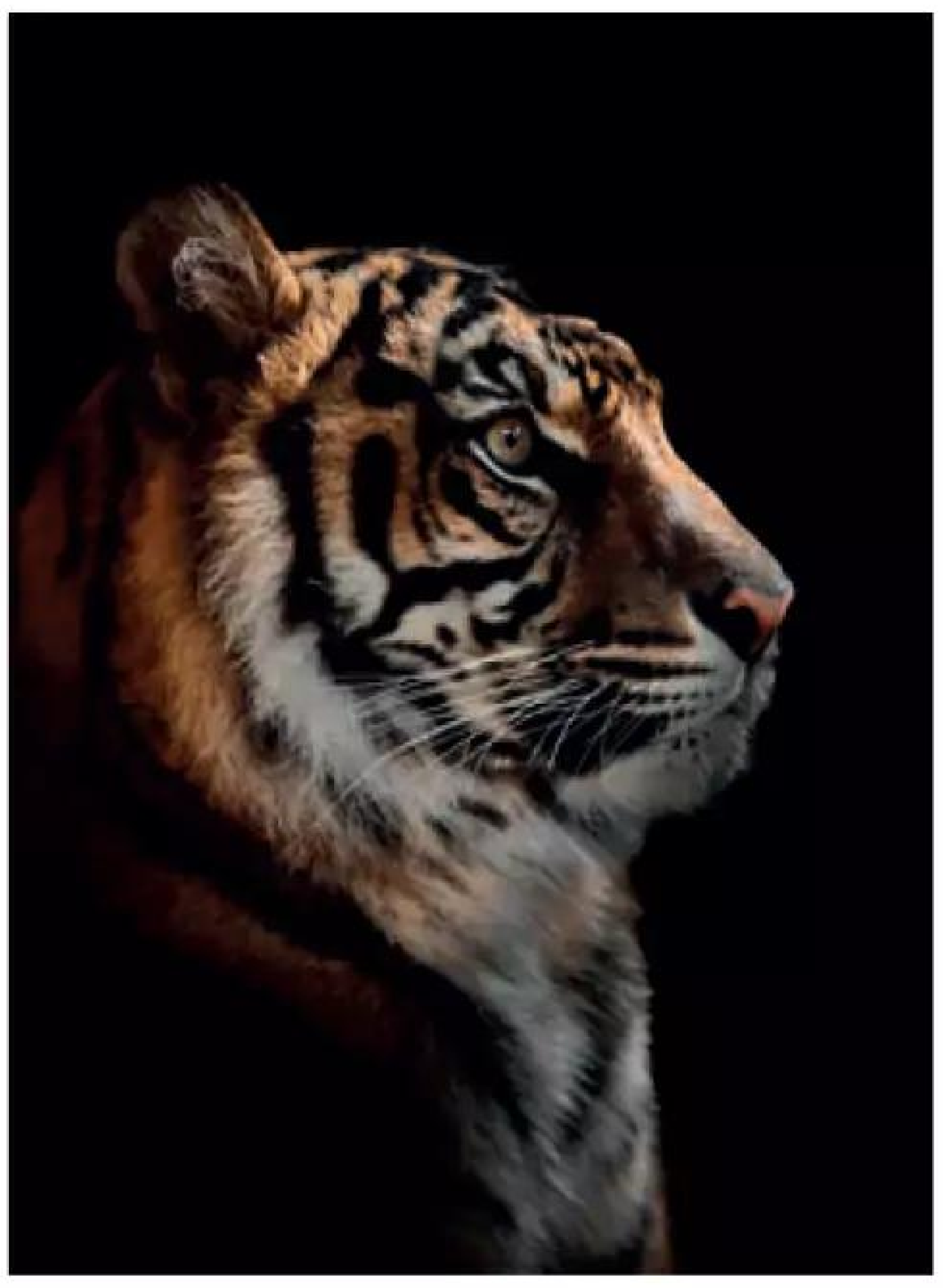
WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

ANTHONY MCKEE: Judges don't get to see any titles as we judge each image, which is perhaps a good thing; to my eye William Haddrill's *Sword Fight* is more of a gently crossing of the paths between two Godwits on an otherwise calm, beautiful morning! But what does make this photo all the more interesting though, is the precise moment of the capture; there seems to be a little bit of distance between these two birds, but for that moment they are one together. Well done.

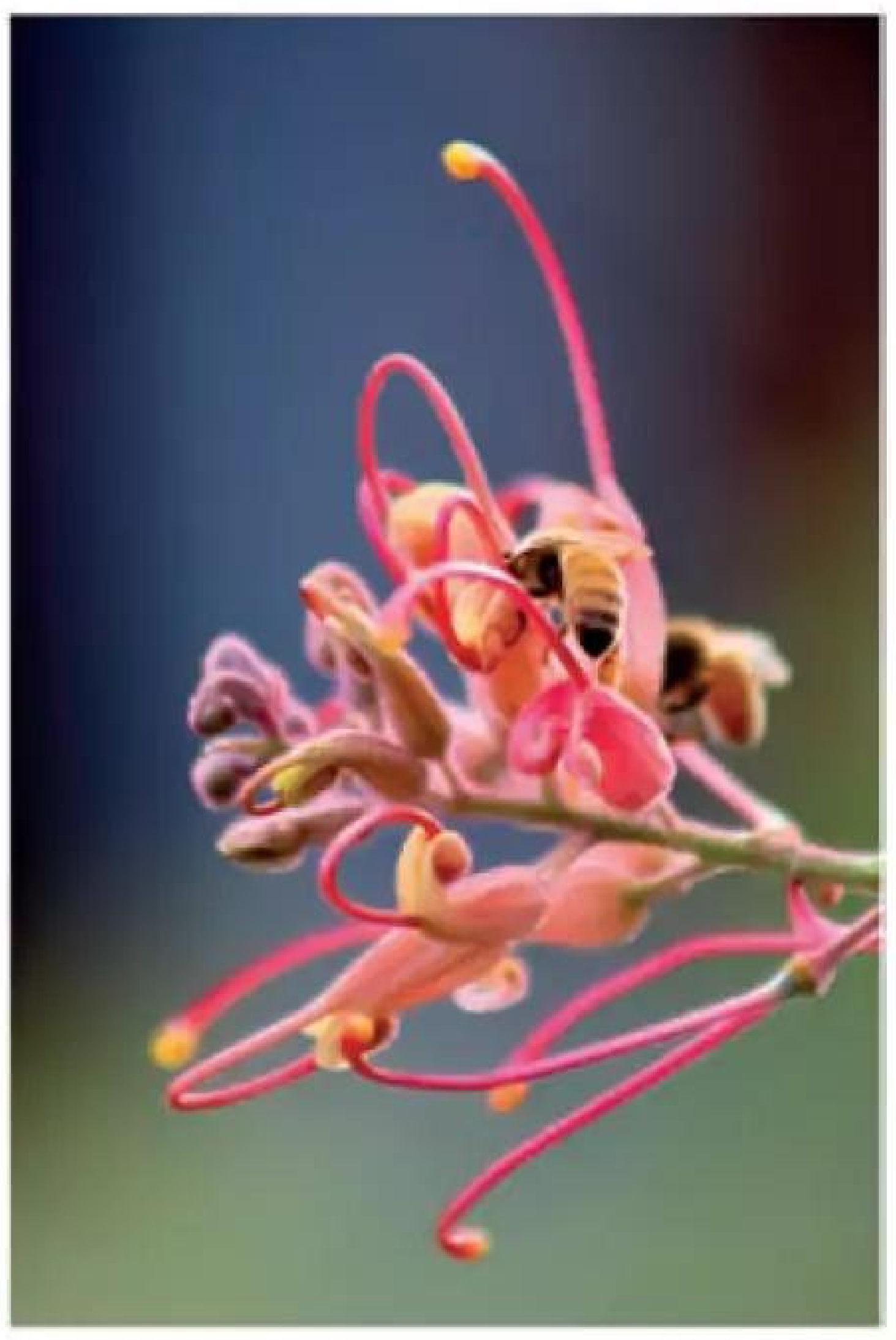
PRIZE: $200 Ted's Cameras voucher.



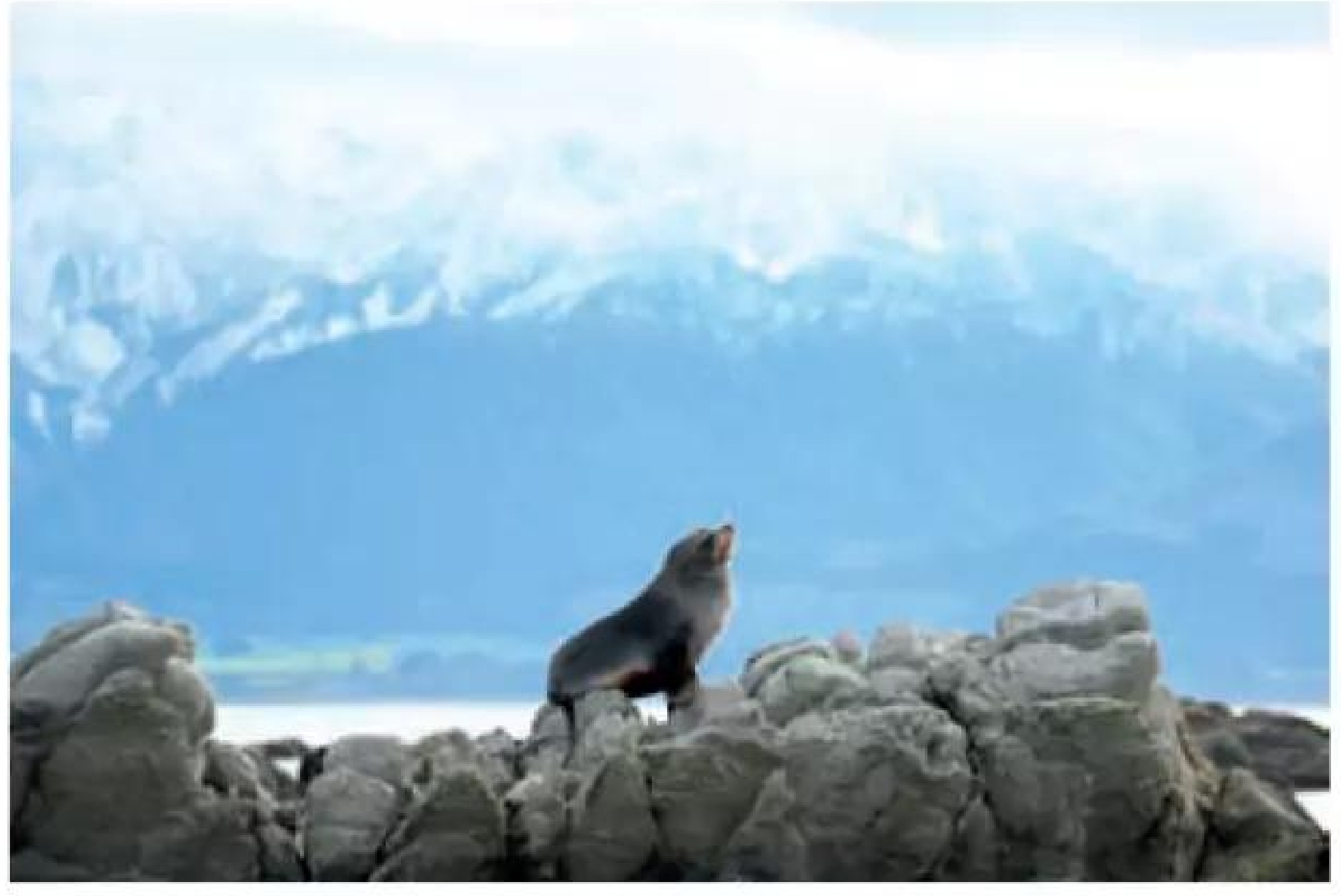
3. AARYAN DHAKAL
THE WATCHER



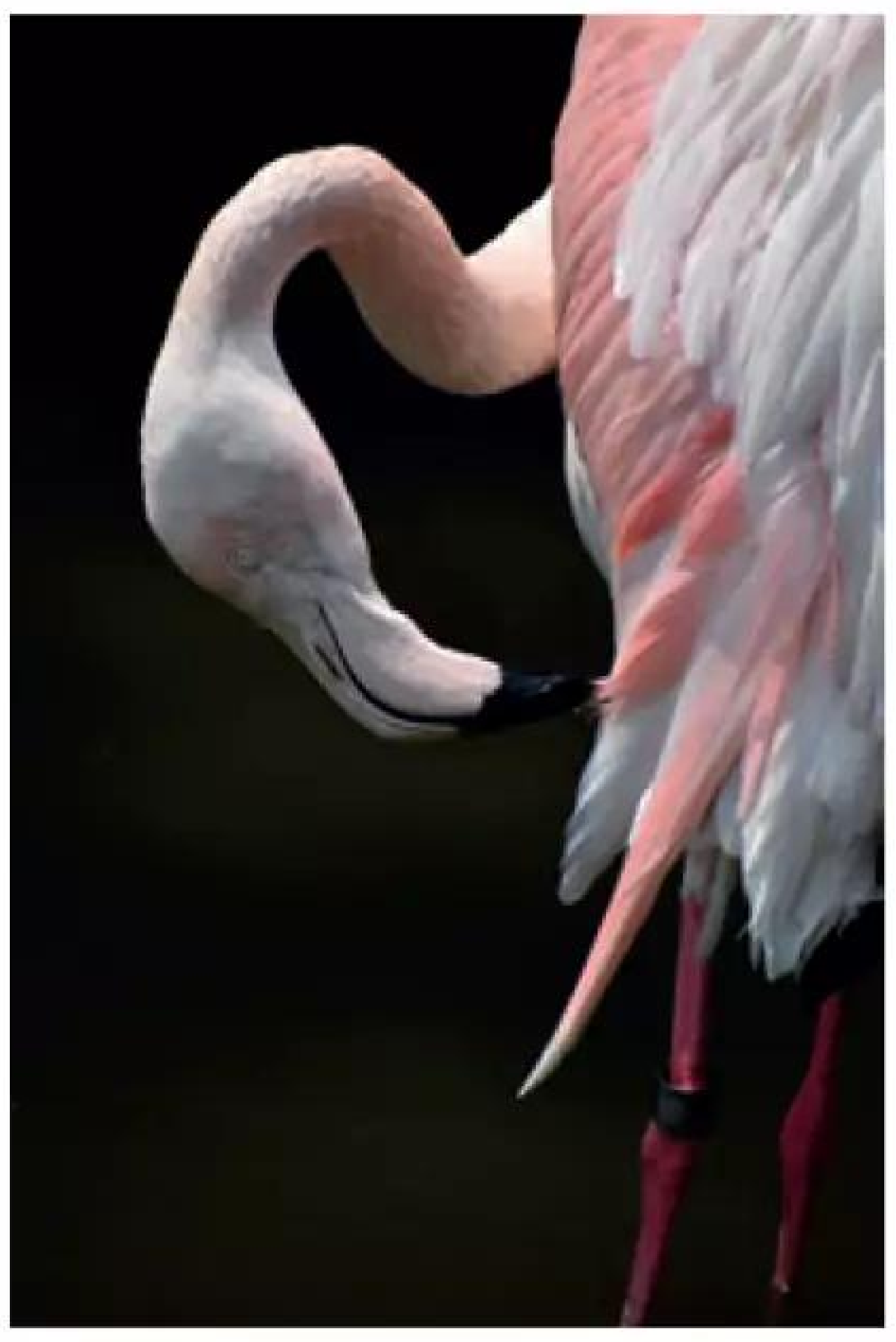
4. MATILDA DUNFORD
BUZZY BEE



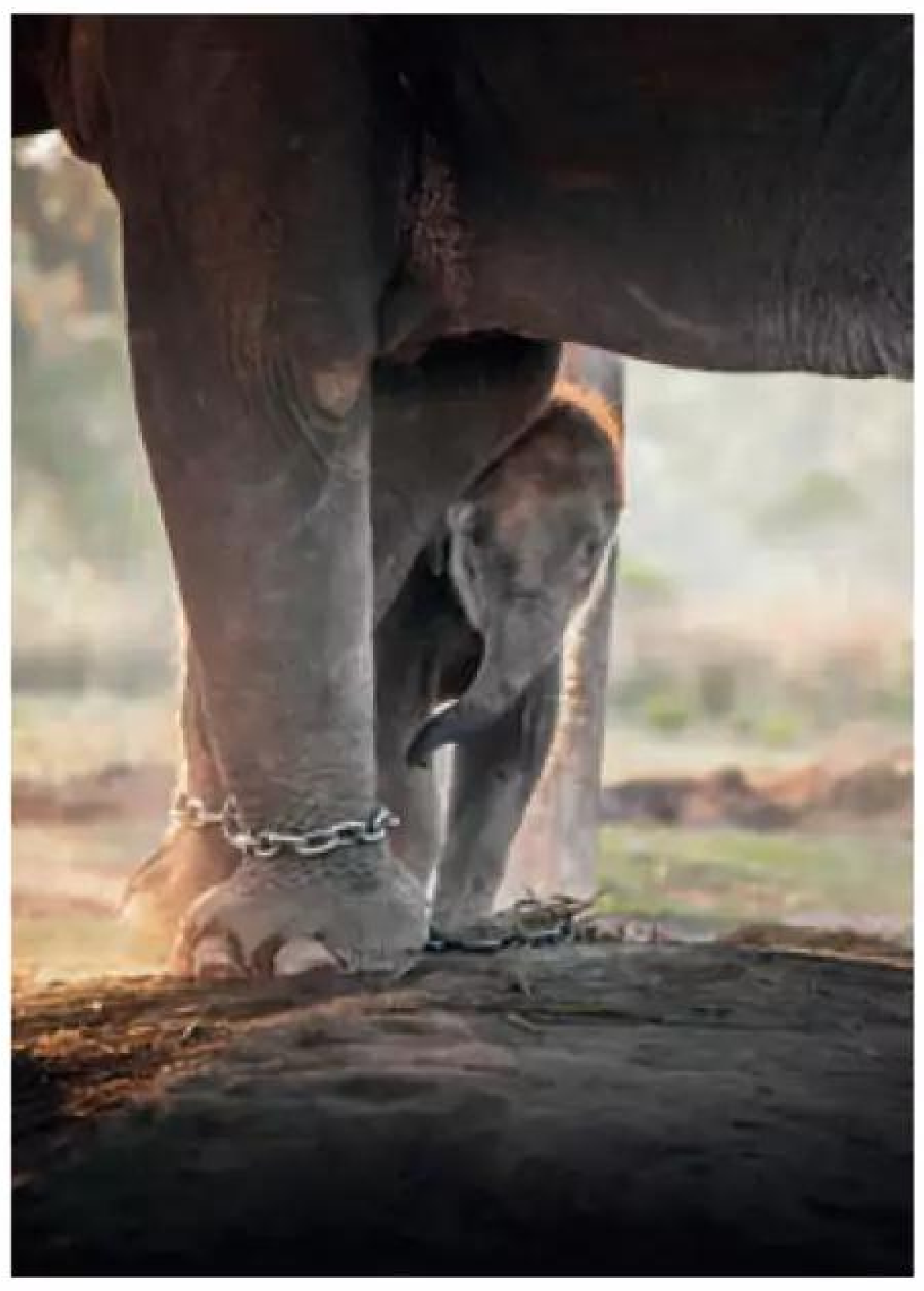
5. RIYAAN S
I'LL HAVE A SEAL ON THE ROCKS



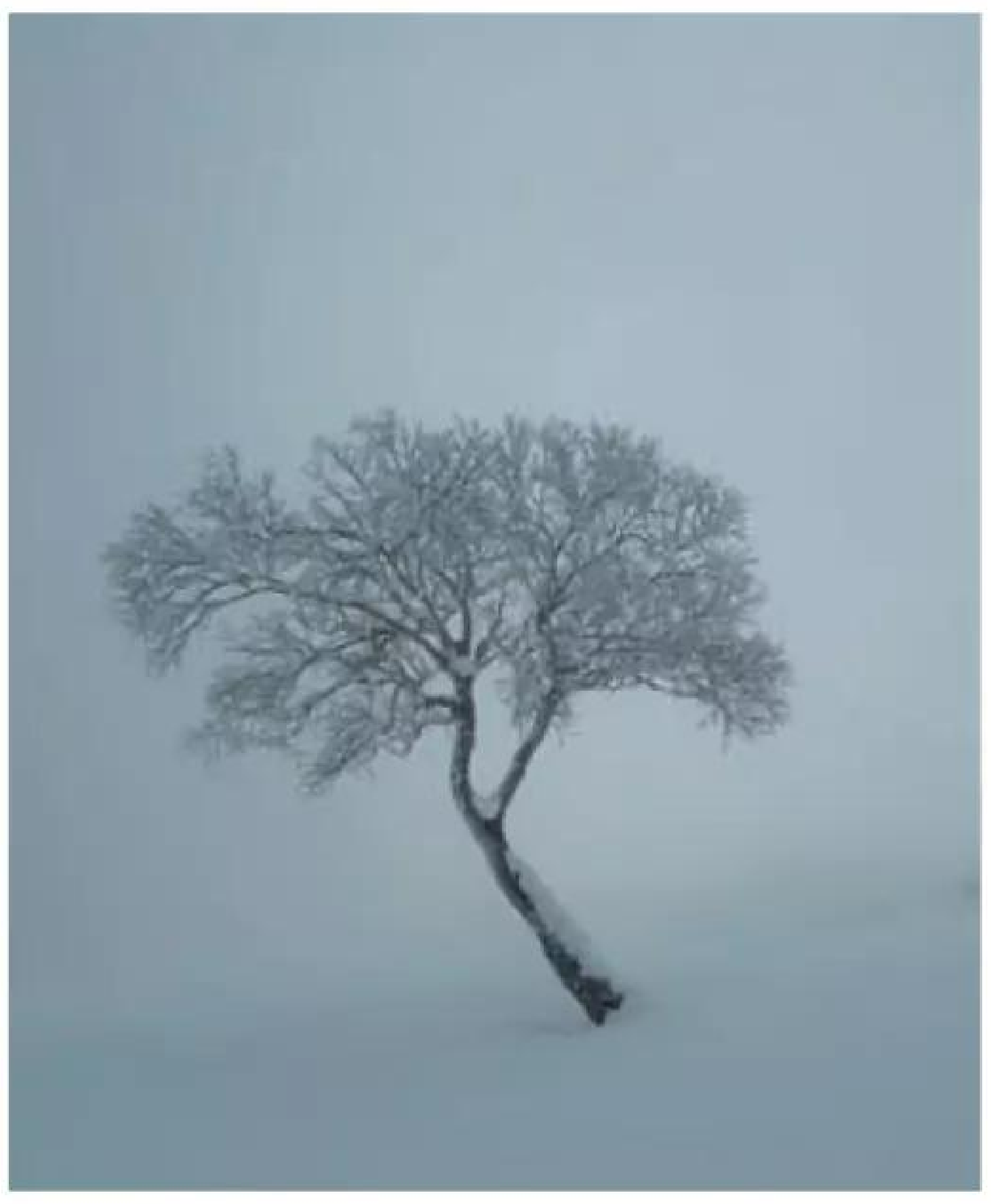
6. WILLIAM HE
PORTRAIT OF FLAMINGO



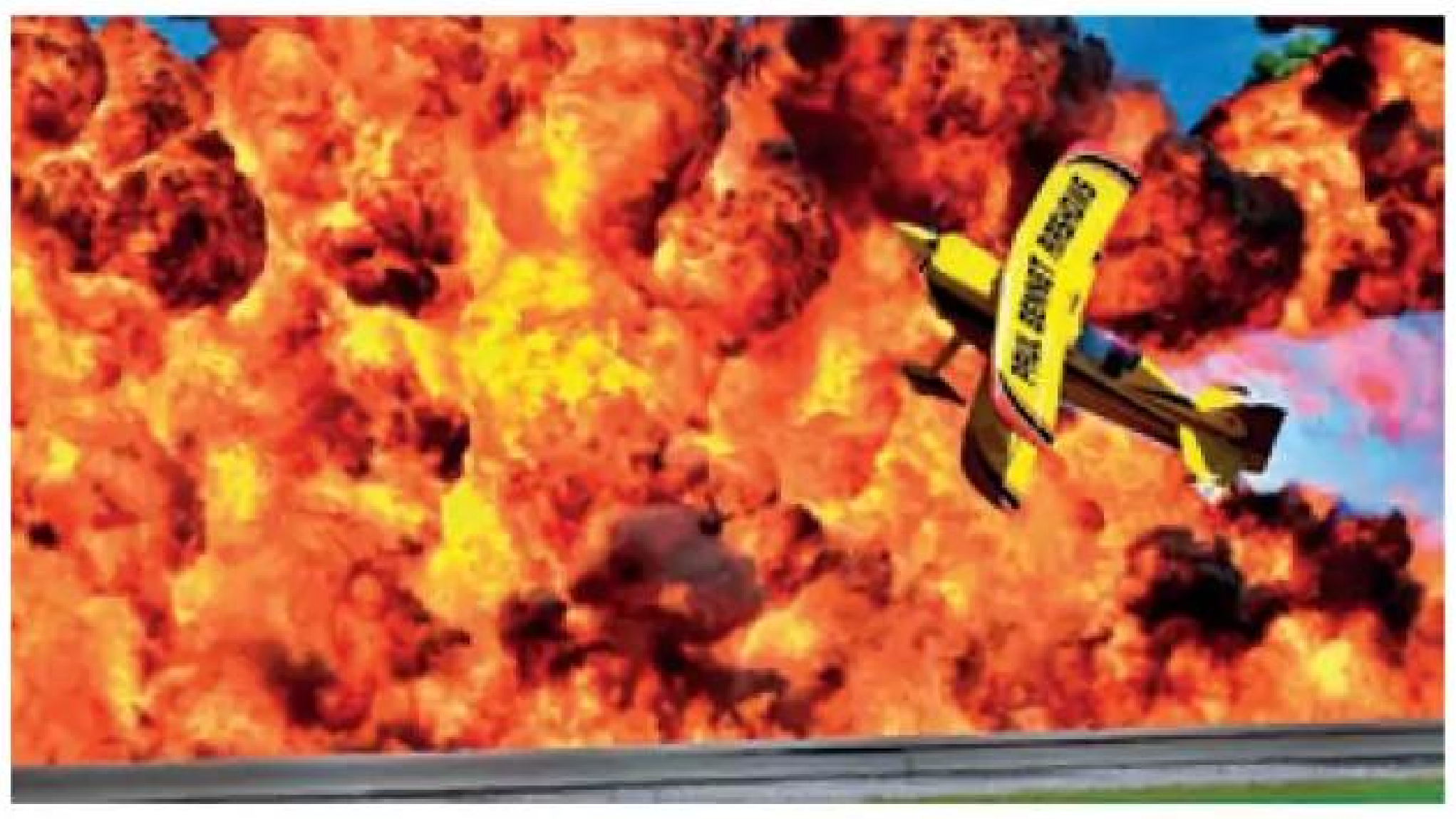
7. AARYAN DHAKAL
BONDS OF INNOCENCE



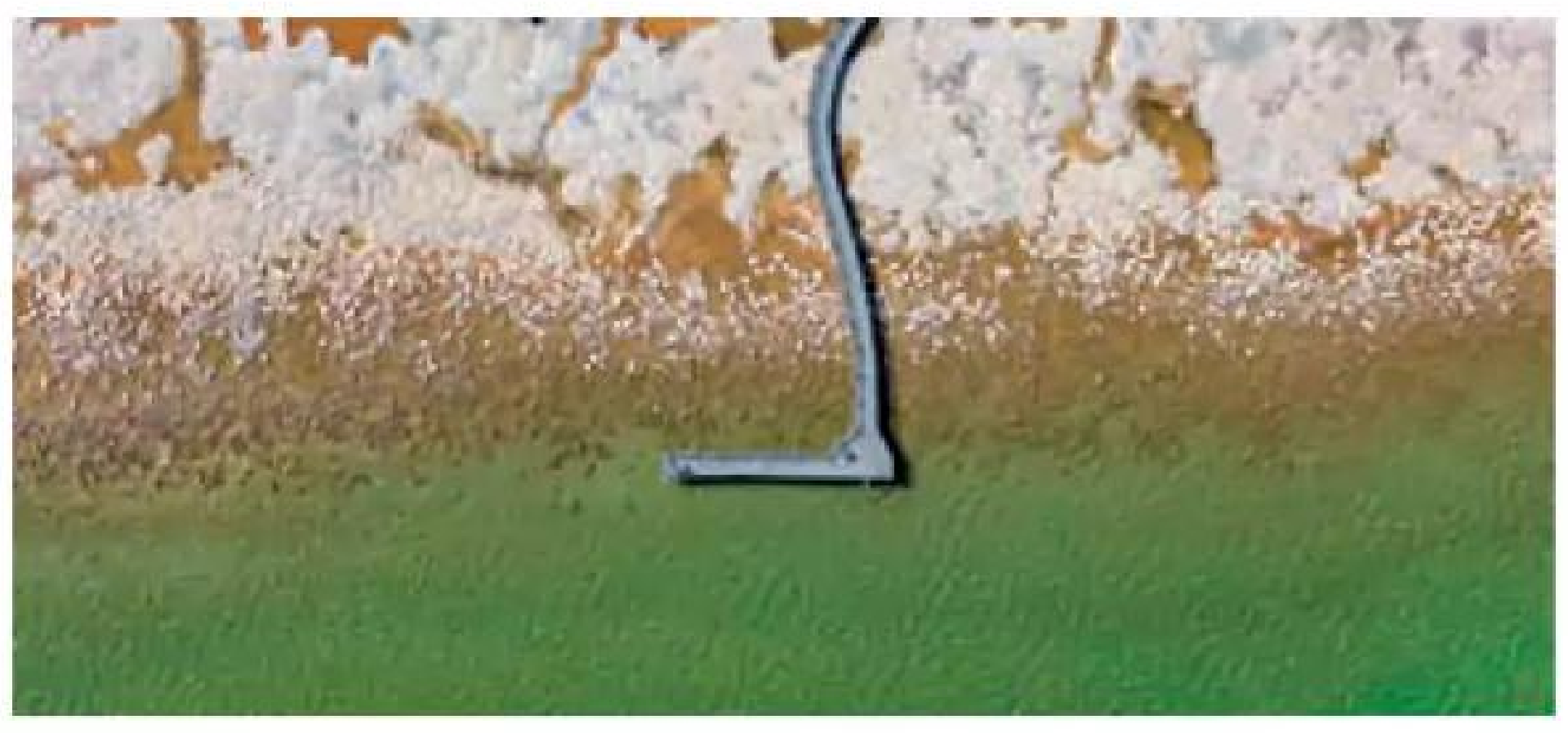
8. DYLAN ARMSTRONG
WINTER TREE



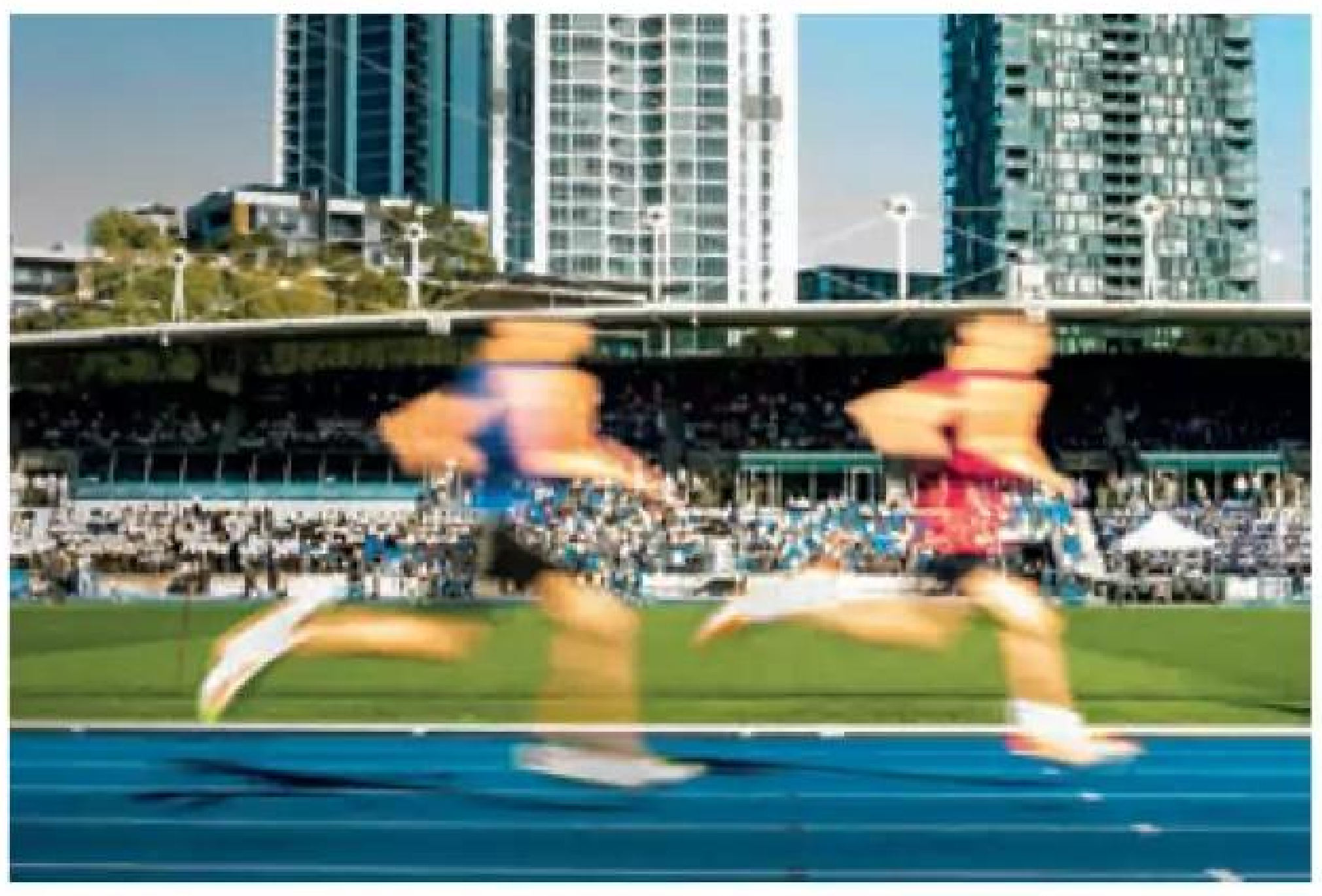
9. JACK BRYANT
DANCING WITH FIRE



10. DYLAN ARMSTRONG
LOOKING DOWN ON TIME

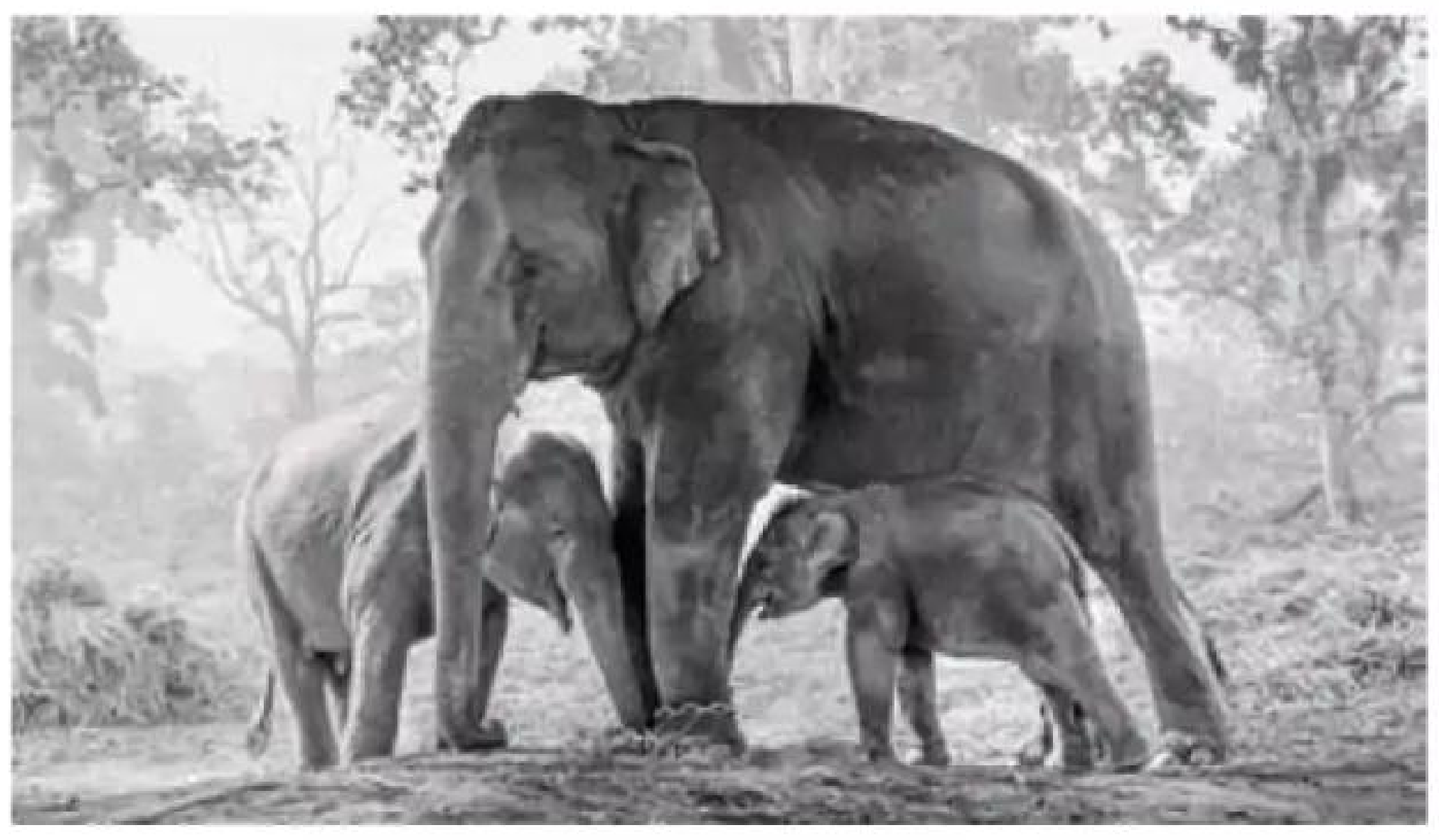


11. HENRY HOPPERTON
BLUR OF COMPETITION



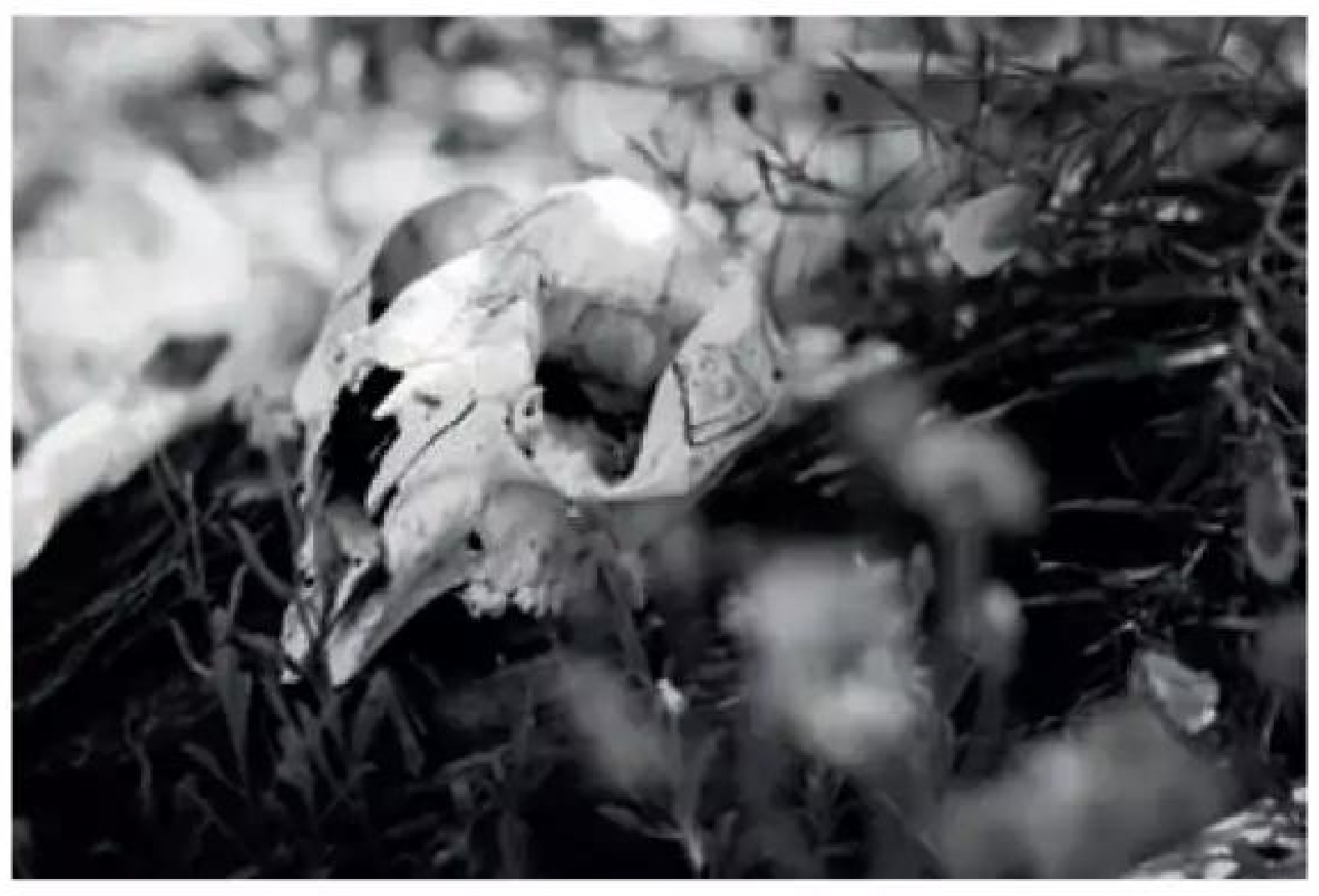
12. AMBER HSU

BORN IN CHAINS



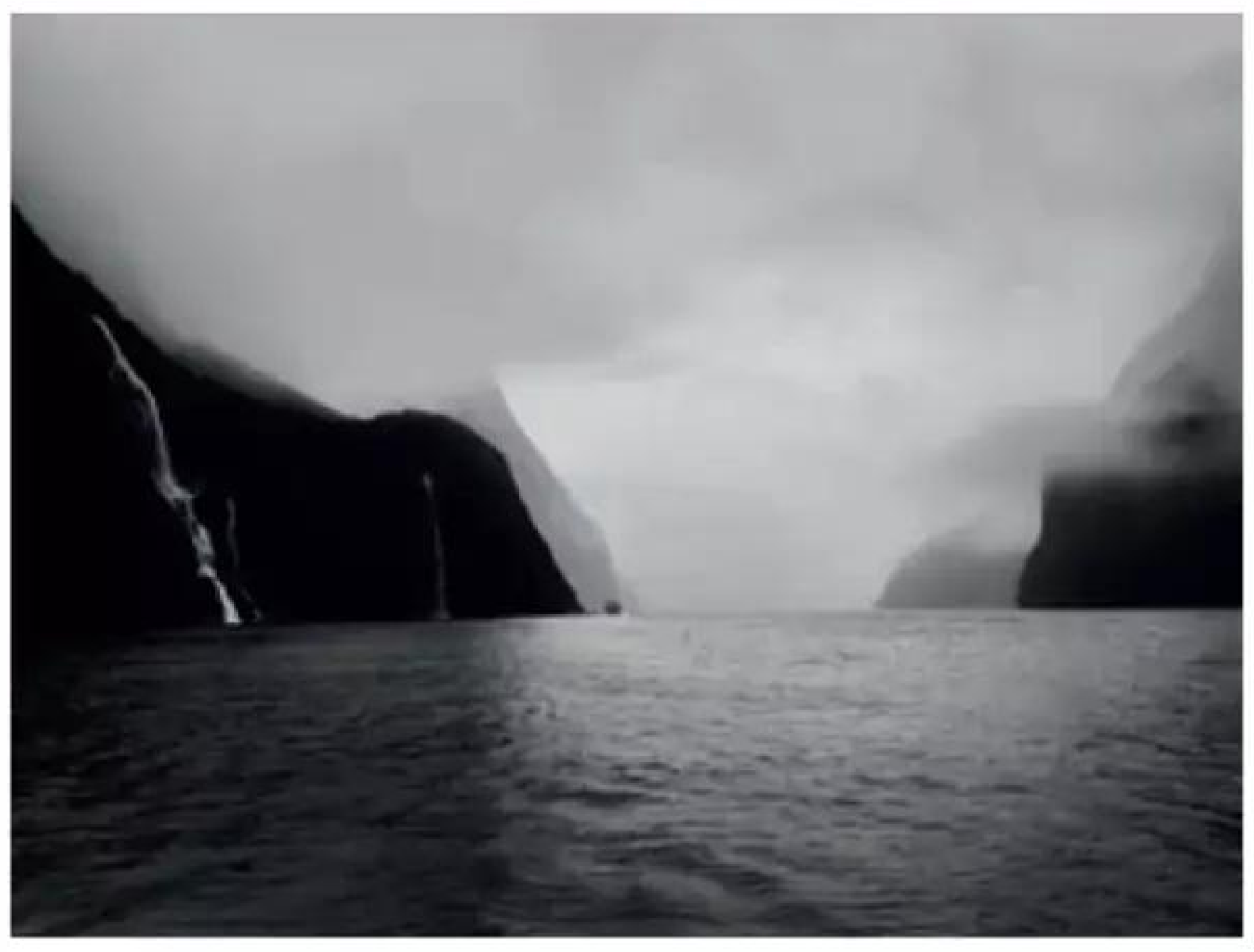
13. PERSIA KIRK

SKULL



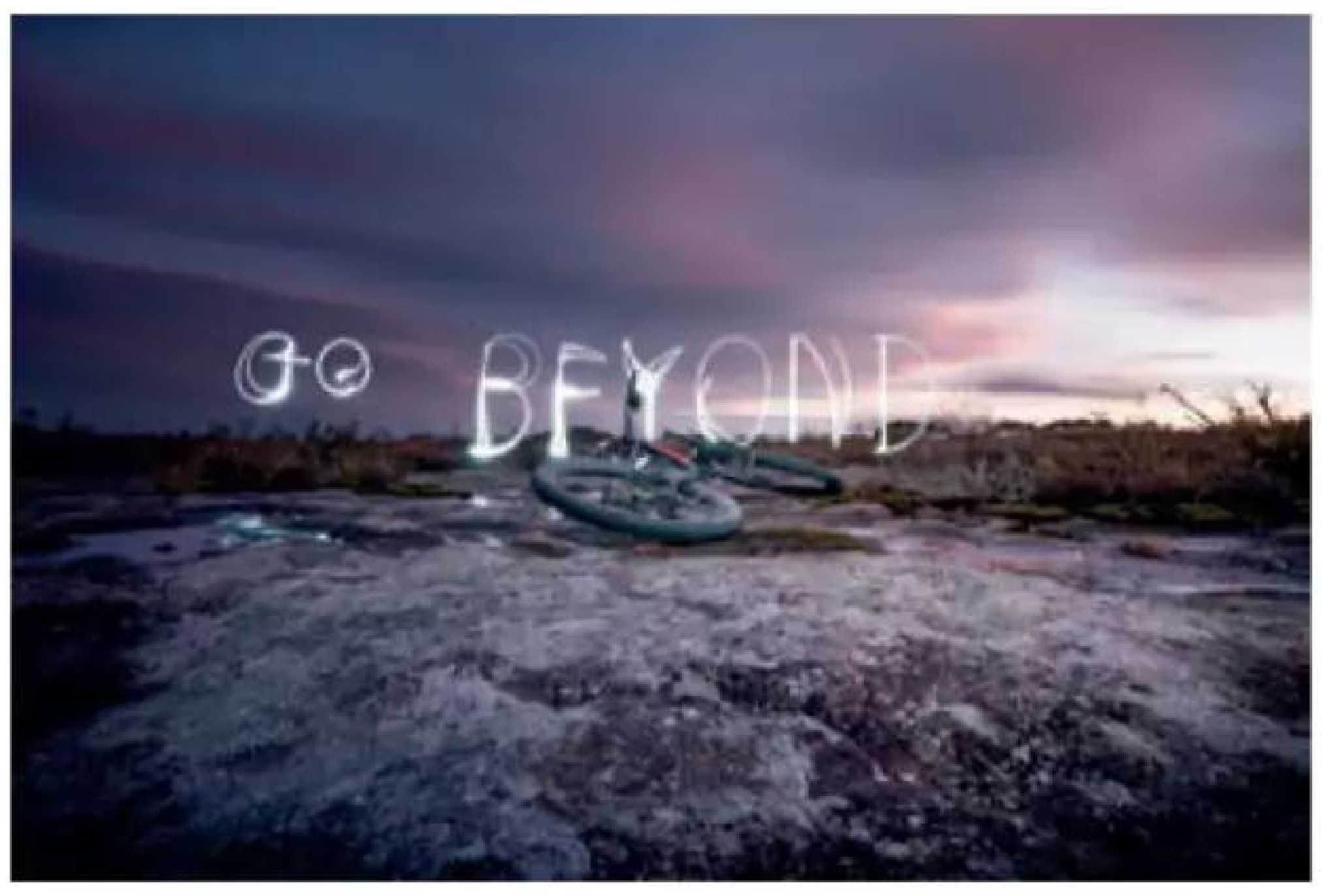
14. A'ISHA STRBAC

INTO THE MIST



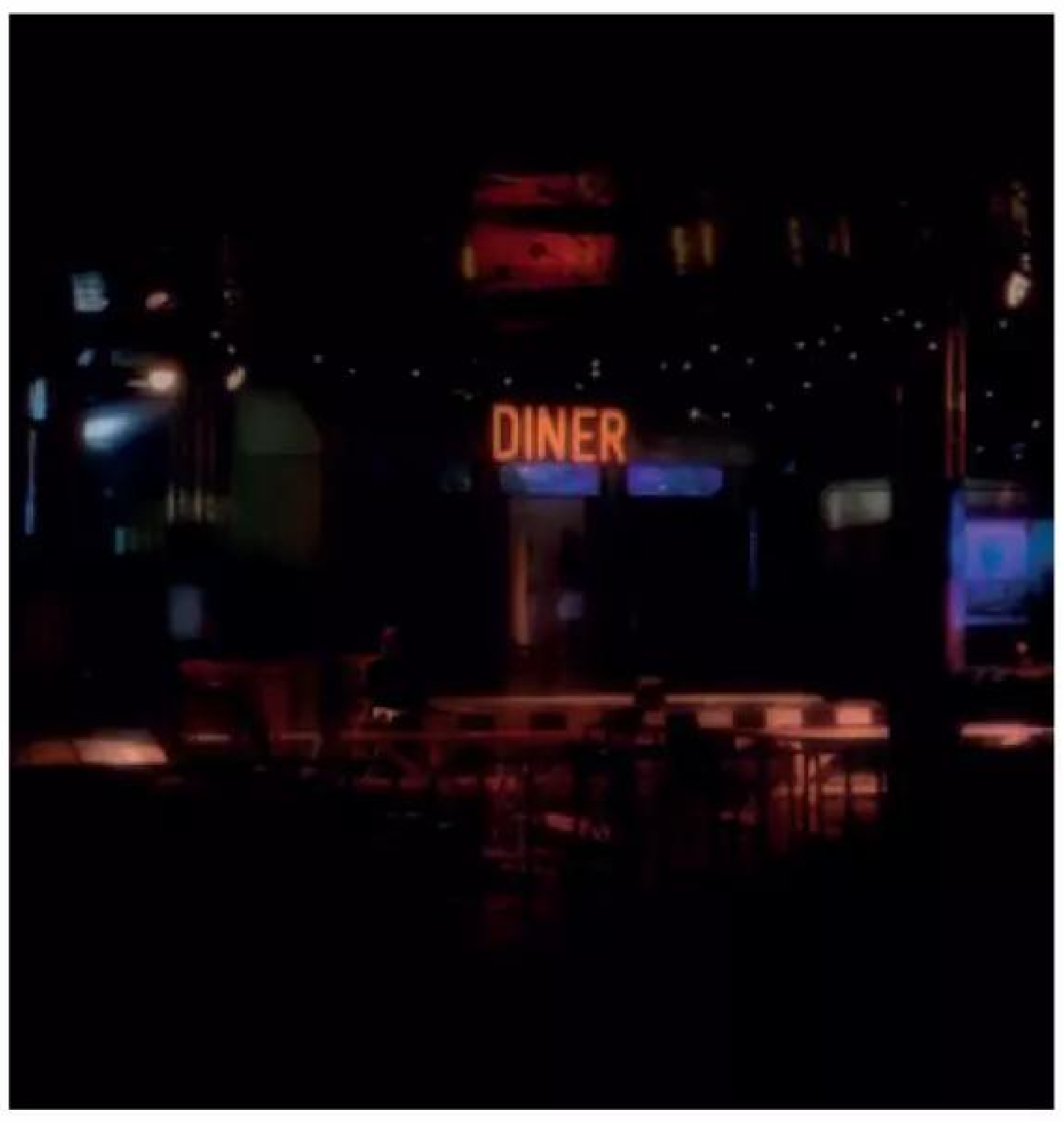
15. LANE WILLIAMS

GO BEYOND



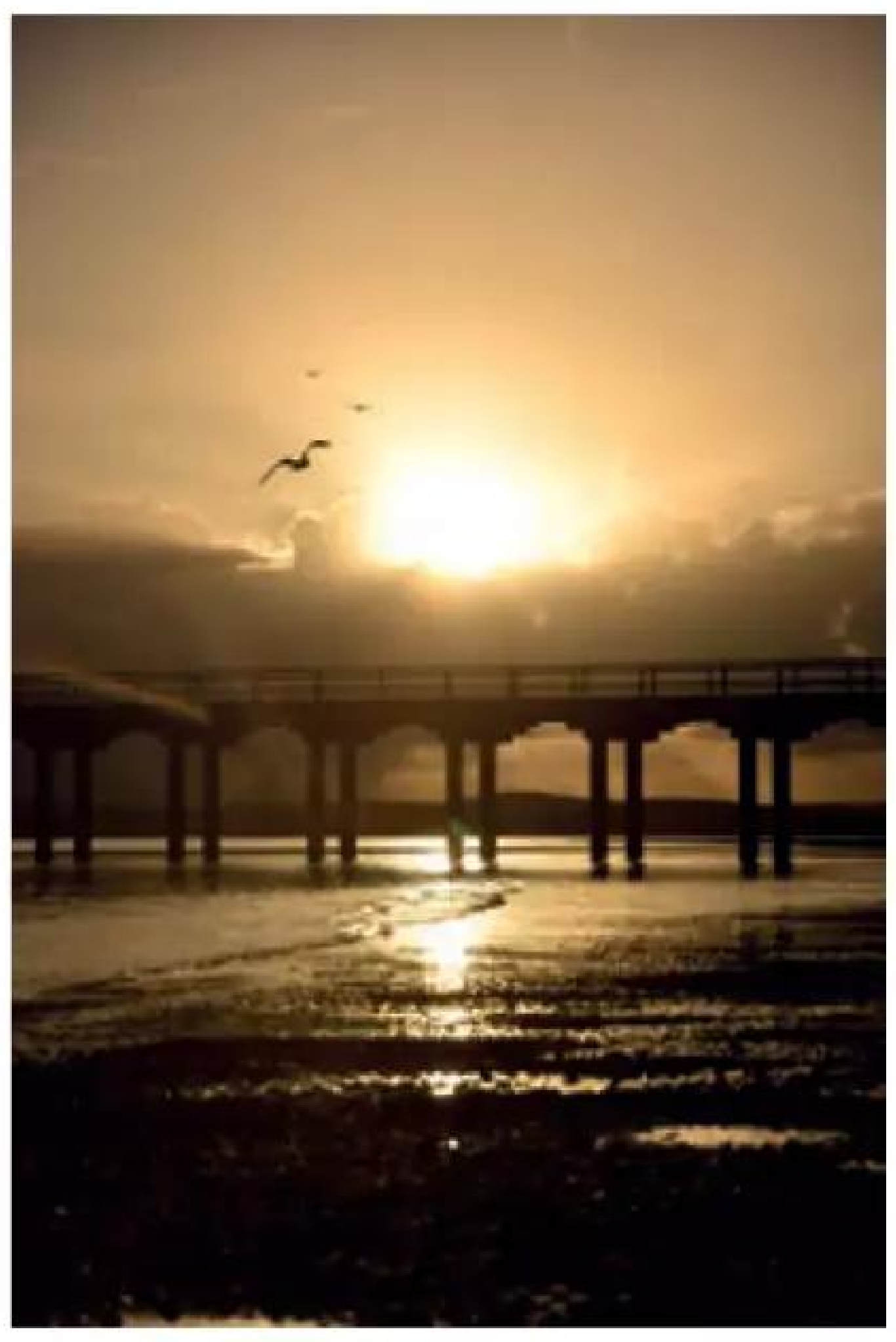
16. JUSTIN CHEUNG

NEO



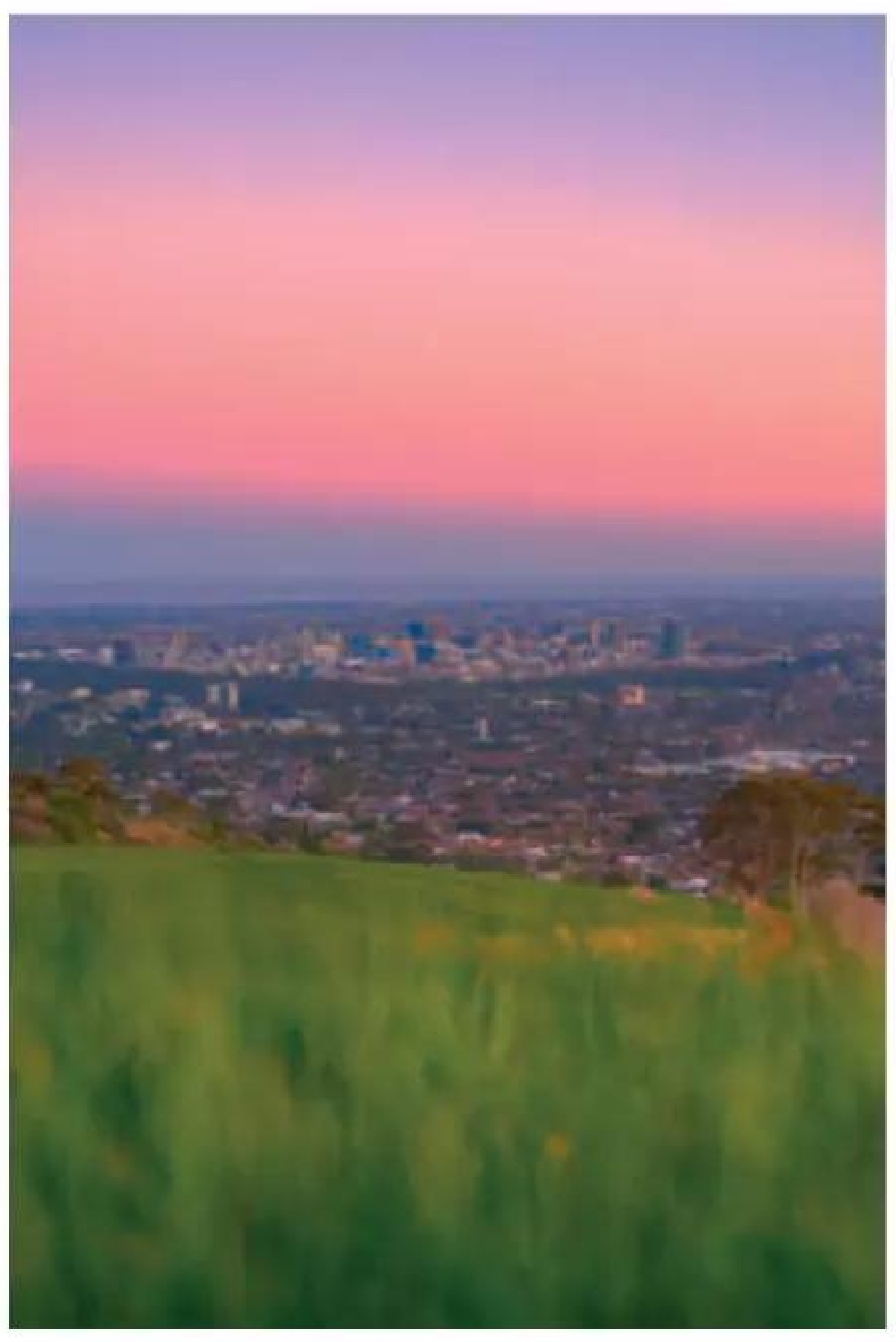
17. MADYSON KENNEDY

SUNRISE AT THE PIER



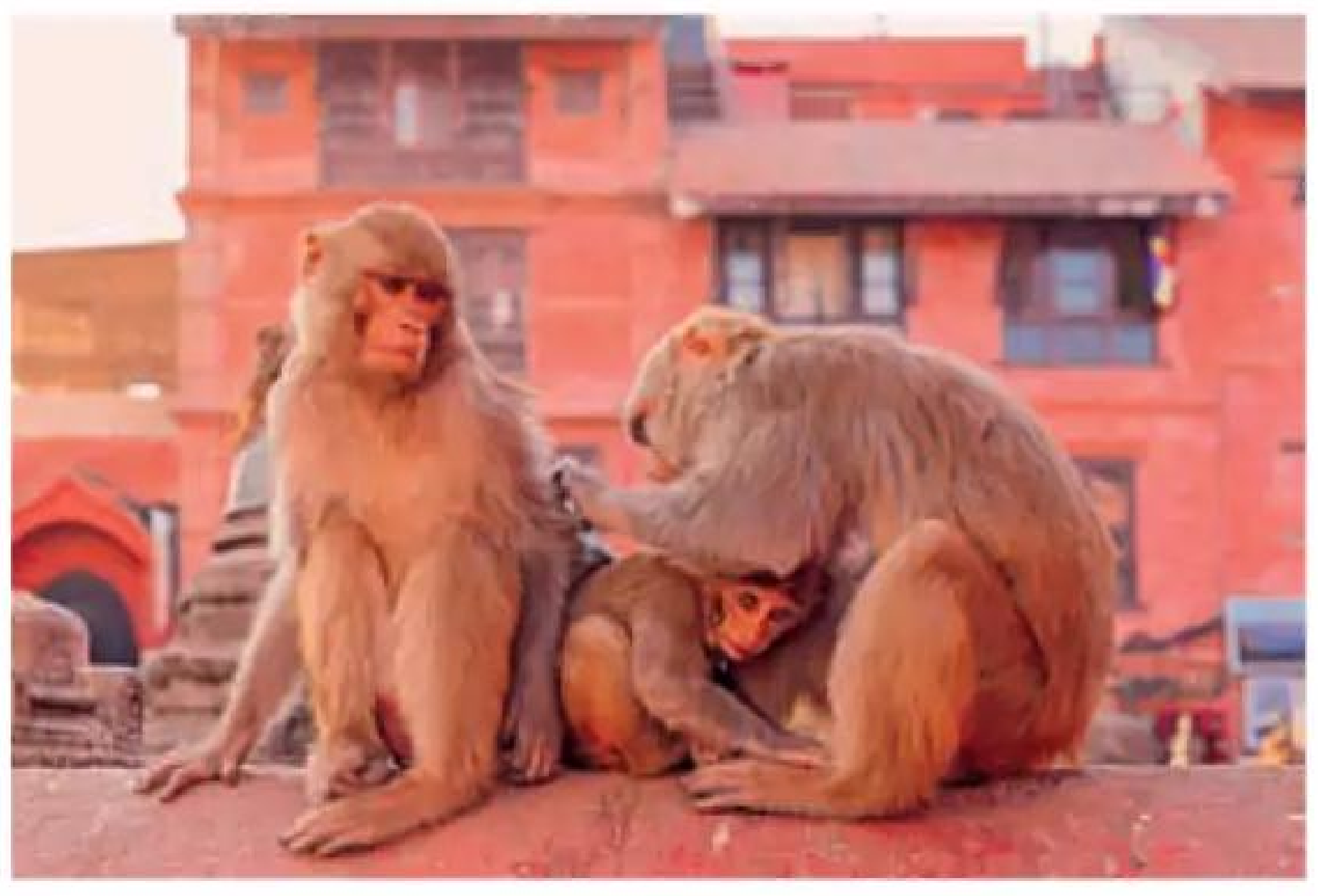
18. CANDICE HU

BELT OF VENUS



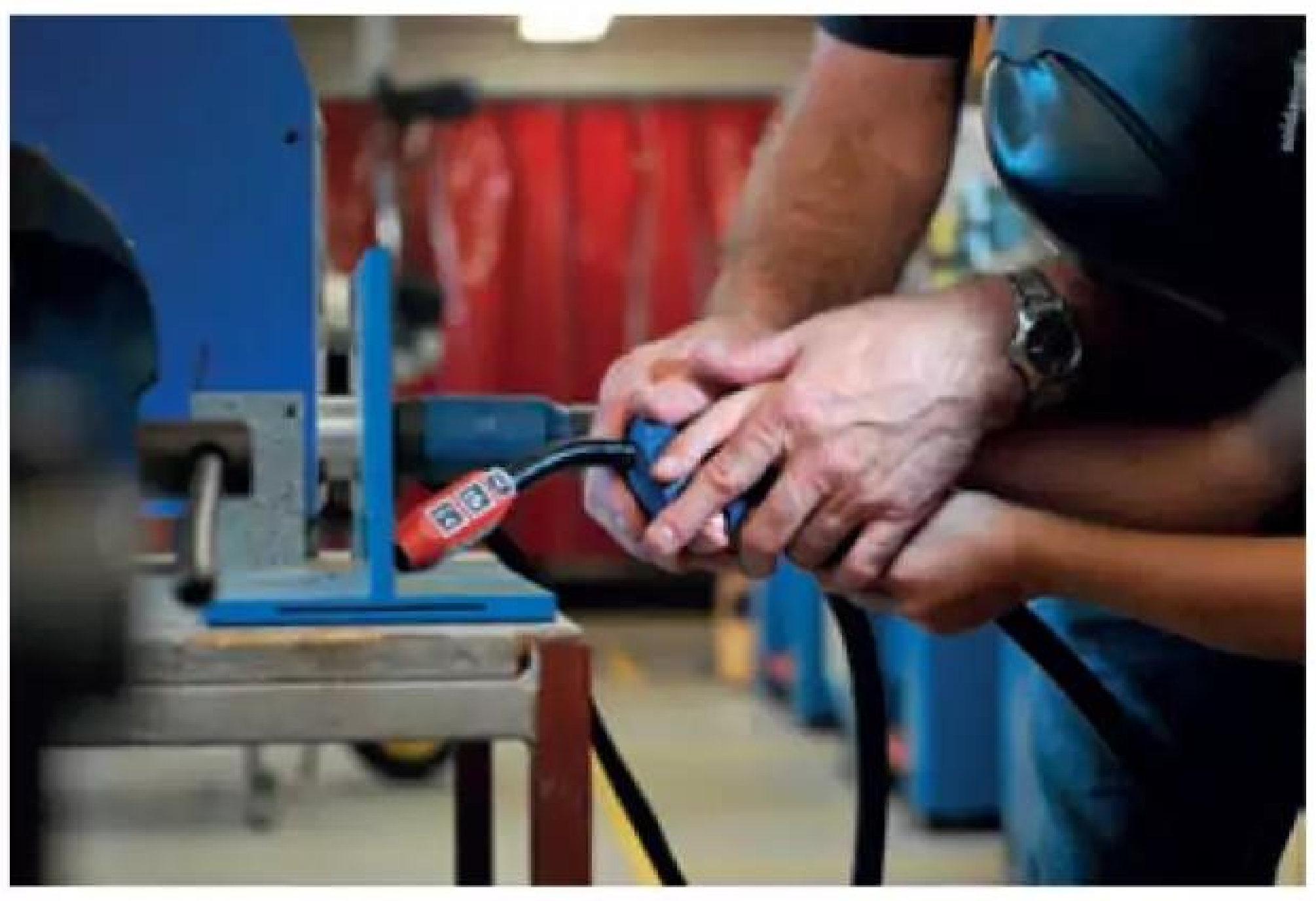
19. AMBER HSU

NEPALESE MONKEYS



20. CHELSEA JAMES

WISDOM MEETS WONDER



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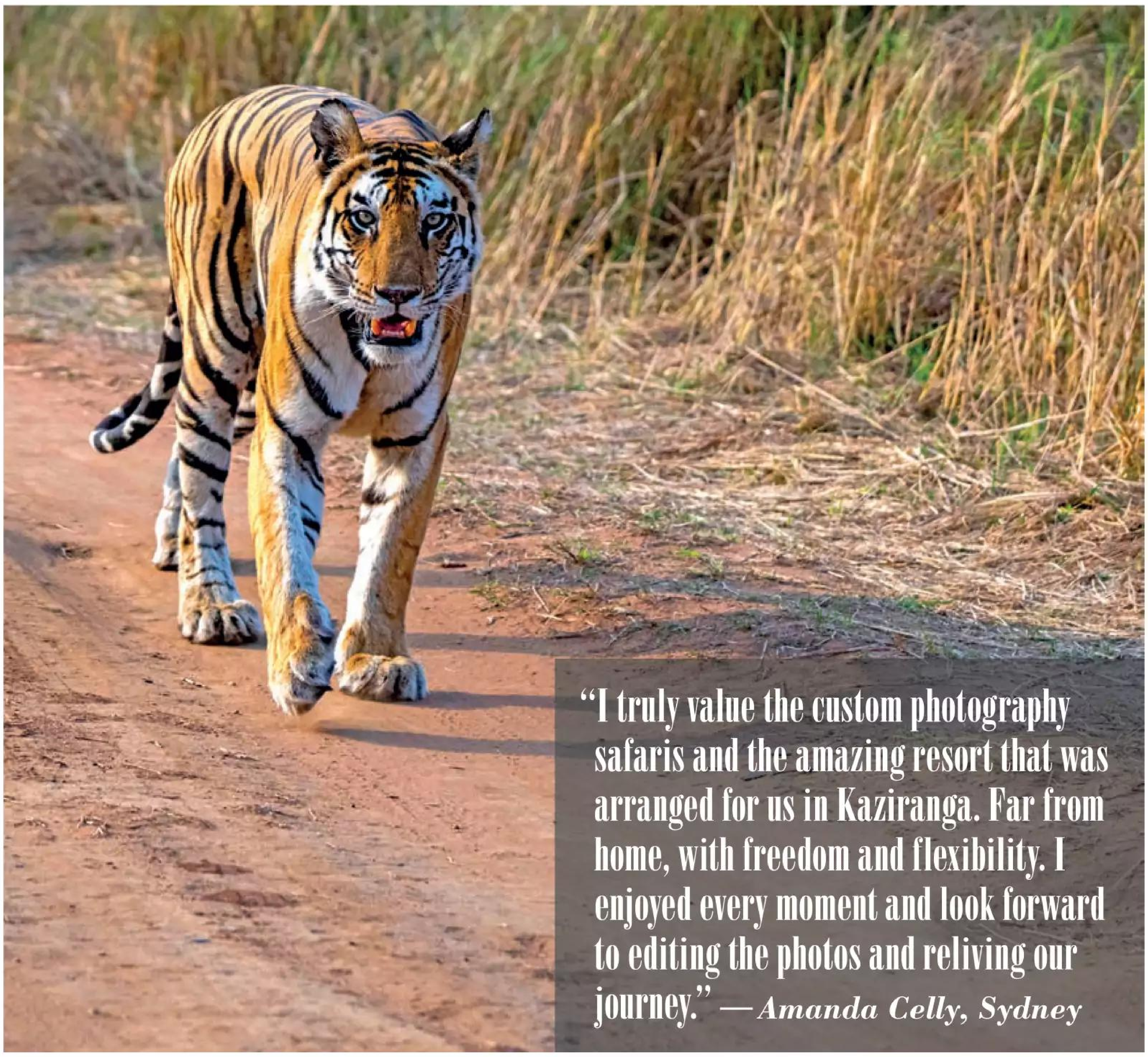

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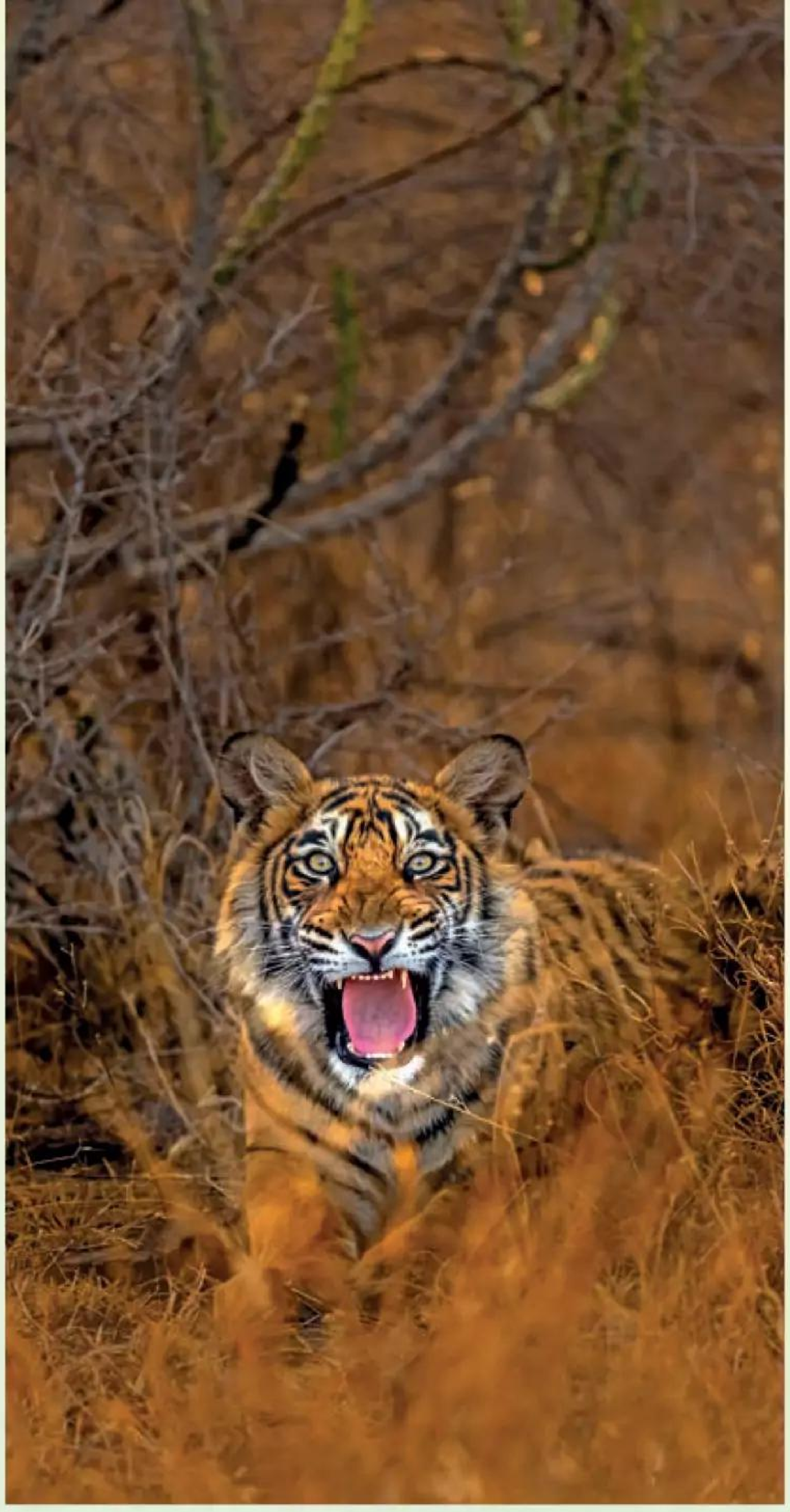

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TIME TO REFLECT

The end of the year is a great time to revisit our imagery, the good and the bad.

WITH HELEN CARPENTER

For those of us living and working on the land, time is measured less by calendars and more by the cycles of weather, crops and animals. Photography has become my way of recording these cycles: sheep in the yards, wheat ripening, golden canola or smoke drifting at dusk. Yet I often save these images and move on without revisiting them.

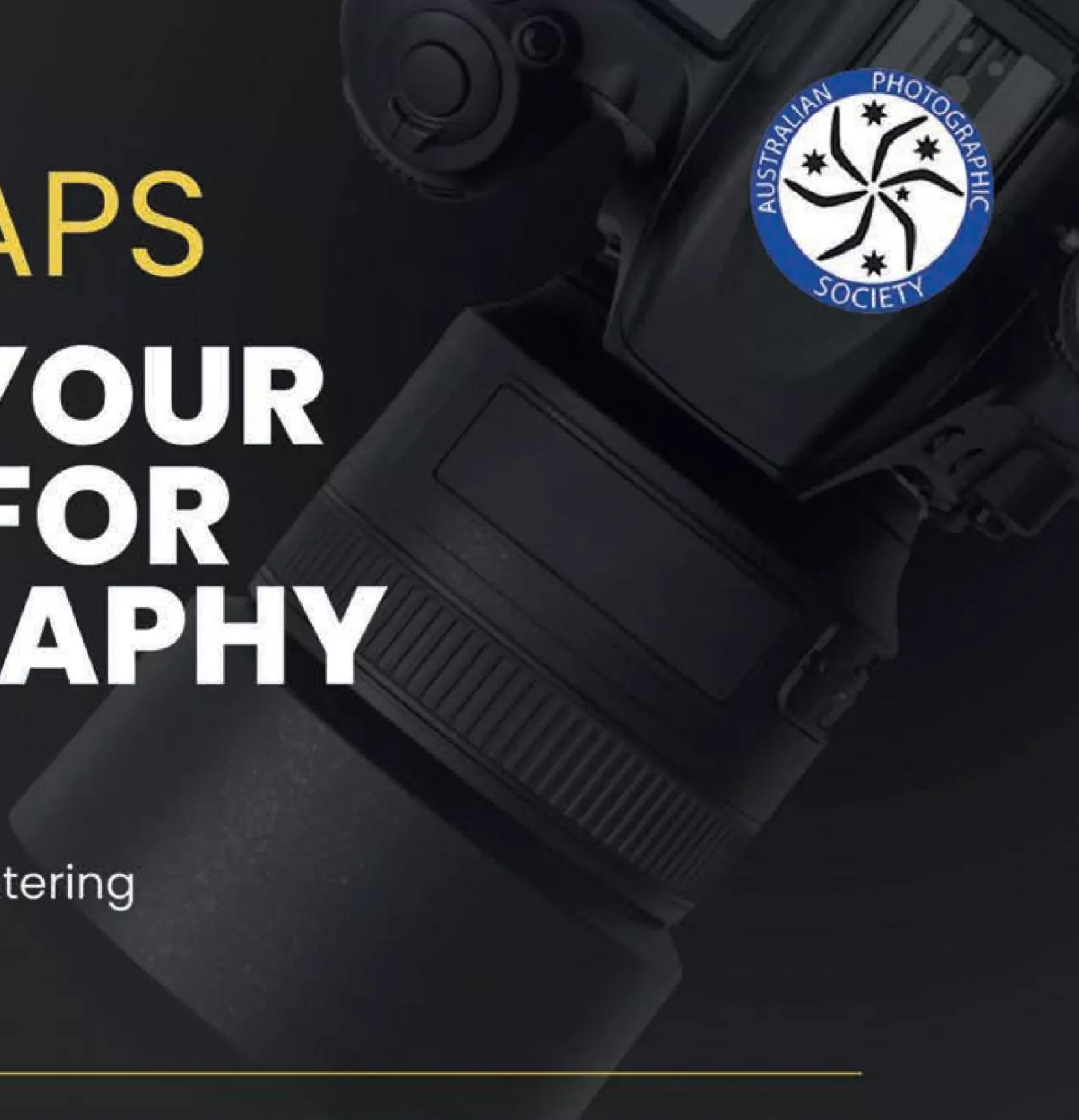
But looking back at photographs like these are valuable. Basic, simple images can gain new resonance with time, and the opposite can happen too, as images I once thought strong lose their impact. This process of reflection helps me understand not only what was in front of the lens but how my eye has changed. It shows me how my approach to light, texture and composition has grown too.

In recent years I've been spending more time reflecting on my photography, and it has become an important part of how I've developed as a photographer.

Some months, I spend an hour scrolling through recent work to see which images stay with me. At the turn of each season, I compare this year to the last and notice how the light shifts over time. Once a year, I'll spend longer doing this, sometimes by printing a selection of images, other times by watching them as a slideshow. It is not about choosing the best polished or technically perfect photographs, but about seeing what the land has taught and how it has changed.

At its heart, photography for me on my farm is about connection to the soil, the animals, the light and the weather. Reflecting on my photographs strengthens that. Even the simplest images remind me of a life lived closely with the land.

How often do you reflect and review the photographs you've captured in a year? I encourage you to give it a try, and discover the value of looking back. ✪



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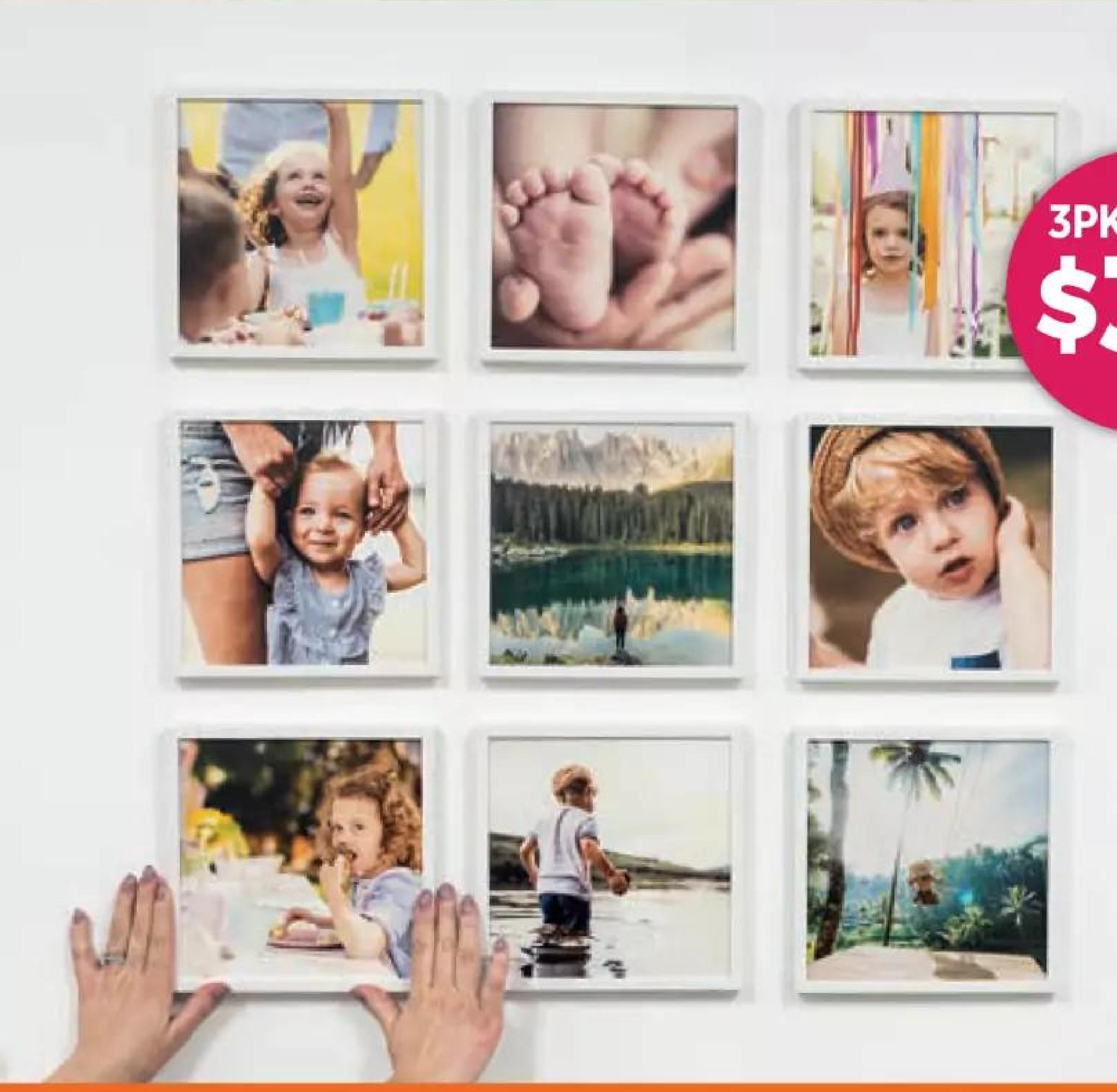

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